

THE RED ROUTE

OR

SAVING A NATION

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BY

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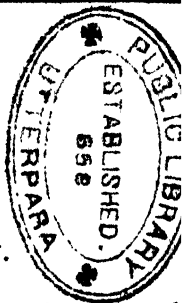
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CHAPTER I.

EILEEN CONRAN.



IF there was one thing more than another detestable to Captain Jeffery, it was to act as head clerk of the Galport barracks. There was no help for it, however, at times. The senior captain was hard at work making love to Widow Lynch, on the northern outskirts of the town. The widow was rich and obdurate, the senior captain was poor and determined; it was quite necessary from the condition of his finances he should marry her and administer her estates sooner or later.

Captain Jeffery liked his senior; he was willing to oblige him up to the date of his marriage; and it happened, in consequence, that the orderlies and the sergeant-major brought him batches of paper to sign which,

had his senior not gone persistently a-wooing, he need not have been troubled with.

"Anything more, Sergeant?" said Captain Jeffery languidly from the orderly-room table, one afternoon. "What the devil are those shots?"

"Lieutenant White, sir, firing at the sparrows with a pistol from the mess-room window for a wager with Dr. Sullivan."

Captain Jeffery dipped his pen in a great inkstand and slowly wrote upon a blank slip of paper, "Dr. Sullivan will, on receipt of the enclosed, immediately apply a fly-blister to the neck of Lieutenant White for the space of fifty minutes. He will further prescribe a dish of sparrows as the chief ingredient of the lieutenant's dinner. Who is colonel of this regiment, I would like to know?"

He sealed the missive and sent it round to the officer's sitting-room, and in the meantime watched a small shower of sparrows fall off a couple of elm trees, while a pistol went on cracking and flashing from an open window.

"It's Sullivan himself, the scoundrel! little White never scored sparrows to such an extent

as that. But discipline must be preserved in the barracks."

A roar of laughter came through the open window, and the red head of Sullivan emerging, pistol in one hand, missive in the other, a loud Hibernian bass shouted to where Captain Jeffery was standing, "All right, Colonel."

Jeffery sat down at his table again, signed some more papers, asked about the sick list, the business of the orderly-room, tried to hide a yawn which escaped beneath his moustache, criticised yesterday's dinners unfavourably, and declared that the afternoon parade was the most disgraceful he had ever seen. As indeed he well might; for there had been no parade whatever, all the men being absent either at their trades in town, or helping the constabulary at the evictions going on at a distant part of the county.

"And look ye, Sergeant," said the Captain, pointing with the end of his quill to some fish in a basin and some mutton on a tray, "if you have no nose, I have, and the regiment has, and so soon as this contract's up no more mutton from O'Flaherty, no more fish from O'Donovan. They want to poison the regi-

ment. Not a word, sir, in their favour. Take that beastly stuff away. Who's that wanting admittance?"

"The king o' the Claddagh's daughter, Captain Jeffery. Am I to admit her, sir?"

"Wait a minute, Sergeant. Is everything signed? You understand about the parade? You hear what I say about the company dinners? And you'll warn number six about the dust in their cupboards? Then you may admit the daughter of the king of the Claddagh."

Free of responsibility for the day, Captain Jeffery became an altered man immediately. He relaxed the rigidity of his demeanour, and adopted a slouch as he went to the mantelpiece to find a cigar for himself. He was naturally a lithe, straight man, of five feet eight in height, slender, with a good head. His sunburnt face showed a delight in the open air much indulged in; there was something almost feminine in the delicate curves of his lips, something distinctly so in the almond-mould of his nostrils; his eyes had a feminine beauty in them, for they had a shade of deep violet, and were large and capable of harassing

alternations of tenderness and command. His brow was well enough for a man who had neither to prepare a brief, feel a pulse, preach a sermon, nor address the front opposition benches in the House of Commons.

Captain Jeffery was conscious that the door had opened and closed upon a female figure, but he was primarily interested in the refractory cigar, and secondarily with the renewed sound of pistol-shooting; he walked to the window, puffing, and shook his fist at Sullivan, without looking at the young woman, and it was only when the doctor had seized White and held an imaginary blister to his neck, that he felt his dignity as officer in charge sufficiently appeased to permit him to turn round.

“God save you, sir,” said a gentle, sweet voice, to which the Captain responded by resuming his cigar, and remarking audibly and leisurely,—

“By Jove!”

To a young gentleman of five-and-twenty the vision which just then presented itself was one calculated to awaken a little surprise. The daughter of the king of the Claddagh—Eileen Conran—dressed in a blue rug cloak, trimmed

with fine ribbons, a gay calico gown, with a red flannel body-gown over it, and a silk handkerchief on her head, might have stepped out of an Andalusian painting of Murillo's. Her feet were of the Andalusian smallness. Her face was of the better Spanish type, the eyes of the peculiar blackness which only an Eastern descent can confer. An inexpressible air of dignity and repose was conveyed in the attitude she assumed, not one of humility, as the "God save you" would seem to imply, but rather of gentle assurance, mingled with surprise.

Captain Jeffery, narrowing his own glances to the range of her face, sighed involuntarily, as he noted the healthy olive of her complexion, and the whiteness of one of her bared wrists.

He bowed to her, as if she were indeed a princess of the blood.

"It was the Colonel, your honour, I would see, if you please," said the girl, curtsying.

"Well?"

"But it was the Colonel, your honour."

"Don't you think I'm good enough for that exalted position?"

"I took ye for the major, sir," said the princess, who thought he was a cornet, assuming the airs of his superior officers.

"I'm colonel here to-day," he replied, scrutinising her admiringly.

She understood the meaning of his glance, though her face only assumed a deeper look of conscious unconsciousness, as she smoothed a wrinkle in her gown with her left hand and drew her small right foot out of sight.

"And how's your royal father, princess Conran?"

"Thanks to your honour, he's finely. Do ye know him?"

"Know the king of the Claddagh? Do I know Nebuchadnezzar?"

"Really, I couldn't say, sir; but it's not your fun, your taking off my father, is it?"

Eileen drew herself up; she was genuinely unconscious this time; her right foot came out into view again; she breathed more rapidly as her eye sought the Captain's with furtive anger in it.

"What an irascible little thing it is! My dear, you shouldn't take offence so easily. If there is anything I can help you to, tell me."

Captain Jeffery had advanced to where Eileen stood, and, with his right hand on her shoulder, he looked straight into her eyes.

"Do you know," he said, almost in a whisper, "it's like looking into the East. I can see the Moors crossing to Spain in their pirate ships. I can see the Spaniards drive them back again, I can see the Arabs watering their camels on the oases of the Soudan. East, farther East still, I can see——"

But Eileen, alarmed, drew back from him towards the door. "It's play-actin' you are, sir; I doubt you're not the Colonel at all."

Whereupon Captain Jeffery took his seat at his desk, and in so unexpected a manner assumed an air of business and command, that Eileen believed in him at once. "Your honour, it's about a little matter of business. Ye see there never was such a year since the Claddagh was the Claddagh, and that's a long time ago. The sea's just clean thick with fish. Oh, there's miles of silver in the Bay, throwing itself out of the water and fallin' back again, an' we haven't nets enough to catch them, or barrels enough to hold them, or salt enough to cure them. Dear me the day, it's loads an'

loads of them that's goin' away for nothing to the Loughan shore to prepare the crops for next year. It's peetiful to think of it. An', your honour, withal we can't find a market. We're shut out from Limerick because the Loop Head herrings are just as manifold as with us. Would you not buy some, sir, at the barracks? I'm sure you'll get them just as cheap as you like to offer."

"Herrings," said the Captain, making a note in an impressive manner,—“do you ever bring ashore turbot at the Claddagh?”

"Turbot, is it, colonel! oh, just as many turbot as the boys like to lift from the sandbanks. And lings, and hakes, and cods, and flounders."

"And lobsters?"

"And lobsters, if you would like them, colonel."

"And skate?"

"Skate, your honour? It's a fish that the poorest in the Claddagh would rather starve than ate. It's not fit for a fisherman's, much less a soldier's table."

"Then suppose," said the Captain, rising from his table, re-lighting his cigar, and loung-

ing towards Eileen, "suppose I were to give the order twice a week: we shall want a detachment of creels from the Claddagh, herrings one day, turbot, cod, lobsters, and oysters the other day; put your own price on them, what would you say? God bless the Saxon, maker of our markets, eh?"

"God save Ireland," said Eileen, as if she had just heard a comprehensive threat of national extinction.

"Is that all you would say?"

"You misconceive me, sir. I'm always thinkin' 'God save Ireland,' and indeed, it'll come to my lips sometimes, whether or no. It wasn't that I meant at all, at all, sir. If you'll deal with the Claddagh, sir, the Claddagh will do its best for you, just say the word."

Captain Jeffery again laid his hand on Eileen's shoulder; she did not draw off as before: she smiled, and held up her finger.

The Captain took her hand. "Truly it is the hand of a princess," he said, and the blood flowed into the owner's face.

"And you mean to say that your father is a working fisherman?"

“You know he is not, sir. He is King of the Claddagh. He has no more to do with the fishing than you have, sir. He leads and marshals the boats; he tells, from the signs of the solan geese, and the gulls, and the porpoises, where the fish are and are to be caught. There is no menial employment in my father’s position.”

“King Conran’s daughter! Where do you live?”

“In the large house, colonel, near the Nunnery, just on the ridge above the sea. We would be proud and pleased to see your honour.”

“What is your name besides princess Conran?”

“Eileen, then, it is, sure enough, if you would know, sir. But I have another favour to ask. And oh, sir, it’s me that wishes I had kissed the Blarney Stone, that I might persuade your honour.”

“Talking of kisses, Eileen, wouldn’t I do? Just think of it—a cold stone built into an old keep—that’s Blarney. How could that make you speak? But me—look upon me in the light of a substitute, and use me as such.

See if your natural eloquence wouldn't come out then." Captain Jeffery put himself into a stiff military posture and waited. "Now Eileen, now, what hinders? I'm the Blarney Stone, I tell you. Oh, you can't reach me, can't you? But I'll soon adjust that. There—though the posture is unmilitary, I adopt it for the space of one minute. Now, Eileen."

"'Deed, and you're a joky man, Colonel, but I've found my tongue without any blarney. It's a favour I want to ask your honour. 'Deed it's a little matter of business again. There's a young man——"

"Oh, the devil there is!" said the Captain, coming out of his rigid attitude and striding to his place at the desk. "Say on, princess. There's a beast of a fellow, you were remarking."

"No, Colonel Blarney Stone, sir, I didn't remark upon a beast at all. But there's a young man, me own relation, sir, removed some distance; and he would be a soldier, sir."

"Oh, he would, would he? Does he want to come here?"

“If you please, sir, and a gallant——”

“Describe him, Eileen.”

“He’s not very big, your honour.”

“Big enough to want to marry you, I suppose.”

“Oh, no indeed, then, and as sure as death, the thought was never in the little fellow’s head.”

“How big is the muff?”

The Captain touched a bell, and a long-legged orderly put his head in at the door.

“March through the room to the sergeants’ mess. Bring me a decanter and a couple of glasses, and march back again, slow time, and shut the door behind you. Is he as big as that fellow?”

“No, sir, but very near it, and if you would think of calling on us—the large house near the Nunnery—I would let you see him. I have no more business, sir.”

“But wait, I want to offer you something to drink.”

“No, sir, indeed and I wouldn’t. It’s only the men what drinks. I’ll go now, sir.”

And Eileen swept out of the room and descended to the barrack-yard. Outside the

gate she was met by a shock-headed, lanky youth, who rushed at her and accosted her in Irish. He seemed satisfied by her response, for he removed his hat from his head and kicked it down the street.

CHAPTER II.

FINN O'BRIEN.

FINN O'BRIEN had been walking for two days, and resting for two nights, before he passed down the southern slope of the Bay of Galport, and looked from the descending road across the city of Galport.

It was a great spectacle for him. Finn had been twenty-one years on the planet and had seen nothing like it. He had observed much within the two days which separated him from his mother's cabin on the Shannon—more than he had ever dreamt of on his mattress upon the hard mud floor where he used to lie till ten o'clock of the morning, making the pig so hungry and so much in need of a sniff of fresh air that he was obliged to rise and let her out.

His mother, in her long blue cloak, had driven him ten miles in her turf-cart from their

little farm, and when Finn had declared he would let her drive him no farther, she had stepped down from the trams, thrown the rope reins upon the pony's neck, and stood embracing her son at the road-side till she had bedewed him with tears.

Finn's mother was a tall, straight woman, with brown hair and brown eyes, and as much freshness in the colour of her cheek as if she had not passed her thirtieth year.

Finn himself was tall and straight, his round limbs encased in tight leather breeches tapering off into leggings, a blue coat on his back, with rows of brass buttons which had been his father's. And it was a pleasing sight on that October evening to see the fresh affectionate woman fold the strong son to her heart, as she cried over him. It was a desolate spot where they parted, nothing between them and the broad Atlantic but a rolling expanse of bog and moor, over which the last lapwings of the season were flitting plaintively. The pony turned aside with the cart, to crop a few roots of heather, and Mrs. O'Brien, holding Finn's right hand in both her own, walked on and on with him.

"Finn, me darlin', Finn, Finn, and it's not forgettin' me ye'll be in the great city. It's not forgettin' your ould mother."

"'Deed no, then, mother," said Finn, crying quietly, and tightening his hand upon hers.

"Oh, me son, me son!" and Mrs. O'Brien raised a wild wail as of a funeral party, and repeated it time after time, till she was exhausted.

"Now, mother darlin', it's back ye'll have to be goin'. It is indeed. Ye have ten long mile to drive, and if the clouds break, it's your new cloak that'll never get the better of it."

"What'll hinder me from going as far as St. Theresa's well, Finn O'Brien? No-thing in the worruld. It's the turn o' the road, and Father Hugh has put a new cross with the blessing o' the Cardinal from Rome on it. Finn, I'll bid ye good-bye there, and the saint will look down from heaven on ye, and maybe make ye a favourite."

Mother and son stepped down the hard road, with moorland on either hand, the pony gazing wistfully after them, and they knelt at the holy well.

“The Saint protect me boy. The Saint be a guide to him. Keep him from evil and in the church’s holy ways. Saint Theresa, bless me boy.”

They were kneeling beside the clear pool of water. Some birds had just been preening their feathers at the side of it, and were now flying about them.

“Pray, Finn. Pray for your ould mother. Maybe the saint’s not so far away as ye think.”

“Good-bye, mother darlin’,” said Finn, tearing himself away and walking rapidly off with his stick and bundle on his shoulder. As he looked down the slope from the other side, his mother was still kneeling, and the pony, tired of his loneliness, was trotting down towards her.

“When I’m Lord Chancellor, see if I don’t give her a castle to herself,” said Finn, standing to take a last look at her. And wiping his eyes as he went, he turned northward and was soon out of his mother’s sight.

He dried his eyes much quicker than his mother, and half-an-hour afterwards, as he sat on a dyke-side, with a bundle of pound

notes in his right hand, he had not a miserable feeling inside him.

It was a great sum of money to have, and Finn, who had only been told the story of it the night before, turned over the soiled, greasy notes with wonder and admiration. He had promised his mother that they were not to come out of their envelope till he was paying them into the hand of the professors of the Queen's College, Galport. But Finn, in his eagerness, had forgotten his promise, and, while he ate a couple of hard eggs, with thick slices of bread, he laid the notes on a flat stone and steadied them with a sovereign and a handful of shillings.

"By the holy Moses, but I never saw the like of that," said Finn, exuberant with a sense of wealth. "I think I'm the richest man in Ireland that ever made his fortune out of it. And to think that my poor lamented father had all that money and wouldn't as much as ate a pound o' bacon in a month, just that I might be made the Lord Chancellor. Me poor father! Me poor mother! 'Deed then, an' Lord Chancellor I'll be, too, though I have more money than ever a

Chancellor would want. Ten pounds, then,—oh sure, me father was the great man to save all that an' make me a Lord Chancellor." And Finn gathered up his wealth, putting the notes into one pocket and the gold and silver into another.

It was with no small pride that he stalked up to the hotel at Kilcree, where he was to break his journey for the first night. He had seen Kilcree before; but his mother had been with him and neighbours who knew him, so that his liberty was curtailed. He had, besides, not been very well, owing to exclusive feeding upon potatoes, and was compelled to drink a great deal of bitter water to restore the freshness to his complexion.

This time it was different; he walked across the bridge into the town, made a face at the sub-inspector's door, and halted before the inn with quite an indescribable sense of liberty and importance.

Two commercial travellers were standing in the doorway, one of them with a tumbler of stout in his hand, and Finn was more surprised than disconcerted when the traveller looked at him and raised a great horse-laugh.

"You're the prettiest figure ov a man I've seen in a four days' journey," said the traveller, with much frankness, surveying the blue coat and brass buttons, and suspended bundle.

"An' ye may go four days farther an' see never a prettier," promptly responded Finn.

"Biddy, what d'ye think ov this?" asked the companion traveller, addressing a tousled maid-servant, who was watering a pot of musk with a dust-shovel.

"Hwhat div I think ov hwhat?"

"Put your head through the window an' see."

Biddy did as she was told, and seeing a tall youth, with a ruddy pair of cheeks, eyes as brown and sparkling as they could be, and the sturdiest pair of legs, showed her own white teeth and asked if the gentleman wanted anything.

Finn thought he wanted a pint of stout, like the man who was laughing at him, and maybe a bed after that was swallowed. Did Biddy know Mrs. O'Brien of Loop Head? Know her! Did she know her own mother? Sure now, it was Mr. O'Brien himself, what was going to the Galport college to be a great man!

“To be the Lord Chancellor,” Finn said, with confident simplicity.

Finn was bedded and lodged that night at Kilcree; and he had his first experience of the great world. As a prospective Chancellor, Finn was received in the commercial room of Kilcree with much distinction. The travellers, instead of laughing at him, sat down to a game at “catch the ten,” and played till Finn’s eyes were heavy with sleep and noggins of whiskey prepared upon Dublin principles.

It was only next morning, after the travellers were miles on their way to Ennis, that Finn became aware that he had lost his sovereign and some of his shillings at cards. But it did not hinder him from giving Biddy a shilling to herself, when she brought the bill in upon a salver, and he saw that his night’s lodgings had cost him three-and-sixpence.

“You’ll have to take better care o’ yourself in the city of Galport, Mr. O’Brien,” said Biddy, brushing his coat for him.

“There’s people out o’ England an’ Scotland, none o’ our people at all, what lives in Galport to make great fortunes, an’ they’ll tak’ a pride in gettin’ your money from ye, Mr.

O'Brien. But don't you part with it. Many's the dry mouth your father passed this door with, Mr. O'Brien, an' couldn't spend because he would have ye to college."

Finn was a little disconcerted at the loss of his money; he lagged long on his way, thinking over the imprudence and feeling uncomfortable from the number of noggins he had allowed himself to swallow.

Once or twice he sat down in the cool of the evening—it was much cooler than he liked it to be—and reflected upon his lost sovereign and departed shillings. He had a headache. His aspirations after chancellorship were not nearly so clear as when he had bade his mother good-bye. Saint Theresa, he thought, had deserted him. Certainly, she had not kept watch and guard, as his mother had prayed.

His journey was thus prolonged beyond its time; but when, on the third evening, he found himself descending the road over Galport Bay, he forgot his misfortunes. The city he had heard so much about lay at his feet. It was a new land to him—not the Ireland of Loop Head and the Shannon at all, but something

his loftiest imagination had never conceived. For there, in the curve of the bay, with a glancing river running into it, and a great lake on its flank, was a vast collection of stone houses,—monasteries, nunneries, factories, barracks, hotels, gaols,—and the clear air of the October evening was full of blue smoke. Finn leant up against a stone dyke, softened with lichens, and stared at the traps of the country gentlemen as they passed him.

For the first time in his life he saw a carriage and a pair of horses, with two finely dressed men on the box, and the proprietor inside.

What wealth, what power there must be down there to produce such a magnificent equipage! And he, in his ignorance, had thought so much of Mr. O'Flaherty's car, and the doctor's tax-cart at Ballybunion. Finn was well-nigh overpowered by his emotions as the vehicles passed him, and as he watched the sun setting behind the Connemara mountains. But there was fear mixed up with his admiration. What might not happen to him in the great city? He was to be a student in its college, and he was to work his way to the bar and beyond it. But, already, he had

begun to note that the fashions of Loop Head were not those of Galport, and he had a vague fear that his brass buttons were not half so fine as he had imagined. Then he would turn from consideration of himself, and look out across the sands to the wide bay, where the ships were anchored. Father Hugh had taught him what to expect; but it exceeded all his expectations.

Finn opened his bundle, took a clean collar out of it, fastened it round his neck, and stepped down towards the town. He was not to live in it; his father's sister kept a shebeen on Lough Loughàn, and he was to stay there and walk out and in to his classes, as he could best arrange. In the meantime, as he crossed the bridge beyond the college, and saw the salmon swimming in hundreds beneath, he was pleasantly conscious that some young ladies, who passed him, had smiled nicely on him. He made up his mind, forthwith, that the great city would suit him, and that he would suit it.

CHAPTER III.

LOUGHAN.

FINN stood on the bridge over the Loughan till the sun had gone down. His aunt's house was not more than four miles away from the place where he stood. He could reach it easily within a couple of hours. In the meantime what could be more fascinating than this first acquaintance with the great mystery of city life? He laid his bundle on the parapet—it contained six collars, an unbound edition of Sallust, a Greek grammar, three cuffs for the left hand, a parcel for his aunt, and the remains of a boiled fowl—and gave himself up to contemplation. A steady stream of passengers passed and repassed, and he felt, with no little pride, that his magnificent appearance attracted a good deal of attention. "Sure, it's a Kerry boy, then," was the opinion of him expressed by one tall farmer,

standing bolt upright in a minute cart, and driving a donkey with the dignity of an O'Connell.

"It's a swate nut to crack, that head o' yours," observed a tall miller, looking him over from hat to boots.

"Well, thin, an' it's a leg he has," said a grey old woman with a fishing-creel.

A group of young men, dressed as Finn had never seen men dressed before—they were students—looked from his bundle to his open mouth and chaffed him.

"Paddy, begorra, is it a good price ye had for your eggs the day?"

Whereupon Finn began to move off, grasping his stick with a wild feeling of rushing blood at his heart, and asked his way through the streets and squares until he was on the northern high-road to Lough Loughan. He let more than one tear fall for his mother's sake, as he found himself in the country again. He had been so happy at Ballybunion, wandering out to Loop Head and lying there in the white sunlight while the waves thundered far down the cliffs, and the rock-birds eddied in the air.

He had enjoyed himself so much in the turf-boats on the Shannon. And his mother had been so good to him, and the hedge-schoolmaster and the priest had given him so much encouragement in all his tasks of scholarship. Yet he was laughed at in the streets of the city. "Oh, me mother, me mother!" sighed the lad, as he followed an uncertain path towards the Lough. "But I'll build ye a castle yet, when I'm Lord Chancellor of Ireland."

It was under a starry darkness that he found his way to the village of Loughan; for half a mile he had been directed to it by the sounds of laughter. His road led him very close to the margin of Loughan, which under the starlight seemed to his eyes as extensive as the Atlantic; only the wash and drip of the tide among the sedges was subdued and quiet.

He saw red slits of light on an elevation of the shore, which after they had disappeared and reappeared through the intervention of rocks and knolls in the pathway, presently kindled into a little street of glow-worm refulgence. Then Finn found himself standing

in front of a doorway, the lower half of which was closed and bolted. It must be his aunt's, he thought; for as he looked in, he saw that there was a broad earthen floor, with some hard stone benches let into the wall, a solid counter on which pewters and scales were arranged, with a background of shelves, where bottles and miniature barrels were ranged to the roof.

Behind the counter stood a stout woman, dressed in black silk, her head enveloped in a lace cap with crimson ribbons. She had a porcine sort of face, the nose brief and snout-like, the eyes small, black, and piercing, the mouth involuntarily open, showing an expanse of red gums and two rows of teeth in excellent condition.

Half-a-dozen men, in frieze coats, with shille-laghs in their hands, stood about the earthen floor, with glasses.

Finn crossed his arms at the doorway and looked in.

"Bad cess to ye, young fellow; is that a way to look at gentlemen drinkin'? Come in out the could, and taiche yourself manners from people what has them." So said the man

nearest to the door, taking his pipe from his hat and lighting it at a candle on the counter.

"Paddy Joyce, will ye just buy yoursel' a box o' spunks now, and not be puttin' ashes into the light o' the house," said the lady behind the counter, peering out at Finn. "Draw the bolt back, sir, and step in," she continued, as Finn surveyed the premises with a respectful air.

He drew the bolt and stood in the centre of the floor, some inches taller than any of the drinkers, an object of admiration to his aunt, who did not know him.

"I hope I find ye nicely, Mrs. O'Brien."

"You do, sir, the same to you," said Mrs. O'Brien, adjusting her crimson ribbons, and looking at the calves of Finn's legs. "And what'll ye have, sir?"

"Surely, the first thing I'll have is a kiss, Mrs. O'Brien," wiping his red lips with deliberation.

His audacity raised him to an immediate pitch of popularity; some of the drinkers poked each other in the ribs with their sticks, and the rafters shook with the laughter. "You'll be a gentleman from Dublin," said

Mrs. O'Brien, with as much sarcasm as she could allow herself to a supposed customer.

"Don't ye know me, aunt O'Brien? It's me, Finn O'Brien, of Ballybunion, Loop Head, Shannon."

"Oh, core o' me heart, me darlin', me own brother Finn's Finn. An' is it you at long an' last. An' have ye come all the way on your feet? Oh, an' it's Finn himself that's standin' before me. Bhoy, bhoy, come out o' this and get into your own chamber. Paddy Joyce, if there's any more drinkin', it's Hubert O'Harrigan that's to measure the whiskey, it is in my absence, an' not you. Oh, Finn, me darlin' bhoy, an' it's your blessed aunt that is glad to see you." . . .

Forthwith Finn got more kisses than he asked or wanted in an inner room off the tavern, the whole process of osculation being surveyed with philosophic curiosity by a round and ruddy priest, who, with his hat on the table and his toes upon a brass fender, was amusing himself with a decanter of whiskey and a kettle of hot water.

When Mrs. O'Brien had abundantly kissed her nephew and set him at liberty, he made his

bow to the priest, who, without rising, presented him with two round fat fingers, while he conveyed to his lips with his other hand a glass of reeking punch.

"I have a letter for your reverence," said Finn, opening his bundle, and the drinkers at that moment raising their voices ominously, Mrs. O'Brien hurried out to her bar.

"How do you know it's for me?"

"You're Father John O'Clery, I would say. From Father Hugh Kenealy's description to me, I would know you among a million. He said you had a great mark between your eyes—a shillelagh mark from Kildare, from your Maynooth days, and that your lips were like beef-steaks before they are put upon the fire."

"That's the description of a naygur, Finn O'Brien. If he had told you that time had delved sparables in me eye-brow, and that me lips shone like the ruby of Lebanon, I could understand you recognising the portrait when you see the original. But anyhow you come recommended by a good man. Hugh Kenealy is one of the strongest props of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Hugh Kenealy, if he had been more ambitious, might have been at the

court of Rome, wearing a cardinal's hat, at this hour. But he is like myself, he prefers his duty in a humble sphere to moving among the princes of the Church. You will find a glass, Finn O'Brien, on the end of the shelf above the window-altar. Now, me boy, before you present your letter, I give you the health of Hugh Kenealy. Don't make faces at the good punch. I can't abide punch annihilated with spring-water."

Finn laid down his glass and searched for the letter. He turned out the contents of all his pockets, took off his coat to make sure that it had not got into the sleeves, took off his boots and shook out a small collection of penitential shingle; then he remembered that his mother had tied it with a piece of blue ribbon round his neck.

"A good woman, a lady, a Christian Irish lady," proceeded Father O'Clery, folding up the letter, and placing a pound note in his purse. "Just put your head to that door, and say, that if they don't make less noise, Father O'Clery will be at them."

The threat had an immediate effect, for there was a lull in a great outburst of

shouting, in the midst of which Mrs. O'Brien came in and spread the table.

"Father John, you'll find the wing of a plover very nice. An', Finn darlin', there's lashins o' ham to take the edge off your appetite. There's a cheese in the cupboard. Take a hunk of it now. Comin', comin', Paddy Joyce; I'll bring Father O'Clery to ye, so I will."

At that moment a tongs was thrust through the casement at the priest's side, and a woman's voice from the street exclaimed,

"Mrs. O'Brien, sure and this is one of the plovers to ye. Father John likes them, crisp and brown."

There was a dripping plover on the end of the tongs; Father John caught it in the lid of a butter-cooler, exclaiming,

"Is that you, Mary Martin?"

"It is, Father John; sure I thought you were givin' the wafer to Paddy Joyce's grandfather."

"Ye thought, Mary Martin—you had no business to think. Me plover's as black as a coal; see and roast the next one a little better. Finn O'Brien, you're hungry—try

your teeth on one of the sweetest morsels of the Loughan shore, a whole plover, me boy." Finn sat down, and bringing to his plover the seasoning of a fresh appetite, tore it limb from limb and reduced it to very small bones, before his aunt had time to take the next one off Mrs. Martin's tongs, and place it on her best plate, to set it daintily before the priest.

"I would say now, Finn O'Brien," observed Father John, looking through the steam of punch, "that Loop Head is not a very fashionable locality. Scholarship it may have—I recognise the Greek grammar, me boy,—scholarship it may have—and I know the conspiracy against Catiline of old—but manners and the feeling of polite society is wanting—I judge it from your method of demolishing the fowl, Finn O'Brien. Hunger in youth is some excuse for haste; but let me tell you, that in a suburb of the powerful and ancient city of Galport, we expect better manners from a young gentleman than that he should tear his plover to pieces in the face of society. Have ye no knives? have ye no forks or plates at Ballybunion?"

"Father Hugh has the grandest service in

the worruld. But at me mother's we always found our fingers handier than knives or forks."

"You've been in a state of nature, Master O'Brien. And I don't say that the state which encompassed our first parents is one to be entirely despised; indeed, compared with the complicated fashions introduced into our ancient West by the upstarts who come here from England, it is a state to be admired. But a little civilisation now is not amiss. You'll have a brush and a comb in your knapsack, I should suppose. Or do you use a fish-bone at Ballybunion, like the mermaids on the rocks of Inishmore?"

"Haven't I left me brush and comb at Kilcree? But I'll get it on me way back, at the close of the session."

"That's a long time to wait to put a shed in your hair, Master O'Brien. See to that recess with the bedstead, and the looking-glass in the window. Find a comb there, an' go outside to the well at the corner, wash your face, come back an' sit down, an' I'll judge for myself whether you are to be a scholar or a blockhead."

“Indeed, then, and I’m none o’ the block-head kind.”

When Finn returned, Mrs. O’Brien was seated at the head of the table, her place at the bar being taken by a light-haired, smiling girl, who had just come in from town with a bundle in her hand. The priest’s second plover had come through the casement, done to his mind, and his red face was glowing with geniality.

“And you’re none o’ the blockhead kind, Finn O’Brien,” he ejaculated, with his mouth well stuffed.

“He’s me own brother’s living image, Father John,” said the widow, smiling on him, as he placed a rush-covered chair between himself and the turf fire.

“What have ye done in the mathematics, sir?”

“Nothing.”

“And ye expect to take your place at the college of Galport and to distinguish yourself like a descendant of Irish kings and princes, without a knowledge of the mathematics!”

“I know me multiplication table, and mighty dry reading I find it. And angles and

triangles are not half so nice as poetry and spaches."

"What poetry do ye like now?"

"I like to lie on me back among the red rock-flowers, and read about Fingal coming over the hills in a mist."

"What speeches?"

"I like the spaches where Daniel O'Connell told the English Jew that he was a lineal descendant of the impenitent thief on the cross. I like Burke's spaches in the Hall of Westminster when he flured the Indian nabob."

"Do ye like Cicero's speeches, or the speeches in the book of Livy best?"

"I haven't got that far yet."

"Well, ye think the multiplication table and the triangles are poor poetry and bad rhetoric; I'll not say that I disagree with you. But you like Ossian, and Burke, and Dan O'Connell. Stand up, Finn O'Brien. Do you know any speeches by heart?"

Finn stood up, retreated to the furthest corner of the room, inserted his left hand beneath the tail of his coat, expanded his broad chest, took his tall hat in his right hand, and held it at arm's length. "Grattan's

Reply to Corry," he answered in a slow voice, turning round upon an imaginary audience, and facing his aunt and the priest.

"The right honourable gentleman," he said, "has called me an unimpeached traitor. I ask why not traitor unqualified by any epithet? I will tell him—it was because he dare not. It was the act of a coward who has raised his arm to strike, and has not the courage to give the blow. I will not call him villain, because it would be unparliamentary, and he is a privy councillor; I will not call him fool, because he happens to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. But I say he is one who has abused the privilege of Parliament and freedom of debate to the uttering language which, if spoken out of the House, I should answer only with a blow. He has charged me with being connected with the rebels. The charge is utterly, totally, and meanly false. Does the right honourable gentleman rely on the report of the House of Lords for the foundation of his assertion? If he does, I can prove to the committee that there was a physical impossibility of that report being true. But I scorn to answer any man for my conduct.

Here I stand, ready for impeachment or trial. I dare accusation. I defy the honourable gentleman. I defy the government. I defy the whole phalanx. Let them come forth. I tell the ministers I will neither give them quarter nor take it."

Finn's eyes sparkled with excitement, as he flung his hat in a corner and resumed his seat.

"Mrs. O'Brien, your nephew will do," said Father John thickly, her decanter being finished. "Give me your arm, Finn O'Brien, and help me along to my house."

CHAPTER IV.

COLLEGE.

FINN hardly slept all night, though he had never in his life been in so comfortable a bed. He was too excited to sleep, now that he was fairly installed in a suburb of the great academic city, and that he was to be launched on his career on the morrow. He thought a good deal, too, of his mother, praying perhaps at her altar-piece for him, and Finn himself prayed a little for her in turn.

While he lay through the night watches, he missed the sound of the sea, as he used to hear it when he woke up at Loop Head. At Loughan all was quiet as the grave; not even the genial bray of a donkey to break the sleepless stillness.

The longest night must come to an end, however, as Finn found about an hour before daybreak when the cackle of poultry began in the street.

Then he dressed himself carefully, unbarred the door of the shebeen, and while his aunt and her niece were still asleep at the other end of the house, let himself out into the morning air. In the cool October morning, the suburb was still very quiet. It was eight o'clock, but the silence was that of midnight. Nobody was awake except the animals and some babies, and his footsteps sounded quite hollow as he walked away from his aunt's house.

He was a little disappointed with Loughan seen under the first sunlight of the morning. He had expected large stone houses, as at Galport, but in five minutes he had mastered all the points of the suburb. It was one little street of low, whitewashed houses, thatched with sedge, built irregularly off a knoll, which overlooked the lake, and another knoll which overlooked the plain. His aunt's house was the most important edifice in the street. Father John's was a small, whitewashed structure adjoining the chapel, an unpretending little place, standing by the verge of the lake, and the waves washed the shingle at the foot of its grave-yard.

Finn went up the knoll at the lake end of

the village, and standing in the porch of the chapel, saw the sun breaking over the waves of Loughan. It was an exhilarating sight, and the lad felt his pulses leap as he noted coveys of wild duck flitting from island to island, with the glint of the sun upon their wings. And then far away to the north-west were the dim outlines of a mountain-range, the brave western mountains where the loyal Irish race had its true dwelling, the race he belonged to himself, and which, as Father John had insisted to him the night before, was yet to be restored to its position among the great peoples of the world.

When he returned from the shore, the village had wakened up; the pigs were in the street, the doors were open, and genial gusts of peat reek were blowing out over the heads of infants in the arms of other infants, half-naked little boys teasing their almost wholly naked sisters, and black-haired fathers, clad in a blanket with a calf-skin buskin on their feet, in which they had slept all night, who were taking a pipeful of morning air before beginning the day's lounge.

As he entered the shebeen, he found his

aunt hard at work behind her counter, measuring whiskey into pewters, and handing glasses to a small crowd of undressed labourers—the chief inhabitants of the suburb.

Mrs. O'Brien in her morning attire was not so pleasant an object to behold as she was under candlelight. She had on a petticoat and chemise, and her unkempt hair flew wildly about her head and shoulders; but she was as genial as ever.

"Finn, darlin', Theresina has set your breakfast for you in your apartment. Mr. O'Hara's car will pass this mornin', and you'll get a lift to the college. I haven't time to kiss you. You needn't come slinkin' in at that door, Terry O'Sullivan,—not another dhrop—not one dhrop do you get till you pay me your three months' score. Don't tell me; I know the price you got for your potatoes last week, and you're getting eight shillings a week from Sir George for labouring on the home farm. Oh, well, if you pay with the ready money for it, I can't say no. Theresina, are the eggs boiled for Mr. Finn?"

Finn found his breakfast spread out for him, and within half-an-hour, with his Greek

grammar and his Sallust in the tail pockets of his coat, he mounted Mr. O'Hara's car and was driven into college. The driver spoke, or professed to speak, only the Irish tongue, so Finn, who had been brought up to speak English, had little communication with him; but he agreed with him when, pointing to numerous unroofed huts by the road-side, he said, "Nothing but ruin here."

When Finn crossed the Loughan and entered the gate of the college, the chapel organ was pealing and the sun was shining brightly upon the trees in the quadrangle. There were several groups of students, some of them pelting each other with handfuls of autumnal leaves; some of them scanning a black-board in a porch, where the professorial slips announced the meeting of classes; some of them, arm in arm, gesticulating and renewing the friendships of previous sessions. Finn felt a little sinking at his heart, as he looked up at the high Gothic windows, and into the clear, over-arching blue of the sky, which was heaven's dome to the college. He had never been in such proximity to lofty, beautiful architecture. Yet the groups of young men about him

seemed to take it all as a matter of course. No doubt, one and all of them came to college from manor houses, and castles, and were used to high stone walls, to arched corridors, broad stair-cases and shining pillars. Finn leant up against a tree, and opening his mouth gazed about him with timorous astonishment.

If the Lord Chancellorship had seemed far off to him when he had tripped at Kilcree and lost his money at noggins and cards, it looked even farther off here, amid the splendours of unfamiliar lintels and doorways, among the crowd of young gentlemen dressed like squires.

What knowledge must there not be among them! What genius! And how should he, the poor peasant of Loop Head, stand a chance in the competitions with them?

He scanned face after face and read in them scholarship, gentility, a something to which he had been taught to doff his hat from his boyhood. He could not believe that these were to be his companions. Nor could they, for a group of five young gentlemen, with mahogany dissecting cases under their arms, presently approached him.

"Is it your head or your big toe you want taken off, Pat?" said one burly youth, with an accent so strange that Finn had never heard it before.

Finn smiled and looked with distended eyes into the shining contents of the box.

"You'll be a doctor," he remarked cheerfully; "I'm going to be a lawyer."

The humour of the observation had the force of an explosion. The quadrangle rang with laughter loud, mocking, and strong. The five young men held their sides, pirouetted, and called comrades from the porches.

"Look at Paddy the shark, Paddy the shark! Here, boys, cob him, the blue and buskin villain!"

Of a sudden, the scene changed for Finn from a paradise of architecture, with a slanting ladder of sunlight coming down out of a heaven of blue, to a yard full of wild and exasperated beasts.

"Cob him, cob him!" was the cry raised from a couple of score of voices, and before he knew where he was, he was pinned up against the tree where he was leaning, only his right arm and the stick in it free. But he laid well

about him among the nearest of the forty heads until it was snatched from his hand. Then his tall hat was tossed in the air, and a tangle of hands seized his brown hair and pulled it till he was giddy.

“Cut him in two, Flannigan; a fine free incision from the nape of the neck to the caudal vertebræ.” Finn struggled, and implored, and roared; but it was no use; he was turned round with his face to the tree; he felt a knife passing down his back, and the next moment he was bound to the tree by his own coat, the tails having first of all been cut free, and, with the weight of the pockets, flung far into the quadrangle.

Then a lull came, and he heard a voice from a staircase window—he afterwards discovered it was the professor of zoology—shouting, “You damned Irish blackguards! Are you forty of you all upon one poor fellow? If you were in England, they would teach you different manners. Wait till I come to you!”

Before he came, however, they had disappeared, and were gibbering from safe doorways.

“Come, my man, what’s the meaning of this?”

"God knows, sir," said Finn, gasping and looking ruefully upon his crushed hat and his hereditary blue coat tied round the tree.

"What are you, man?"

"Finn O'Brien, of Loop Head, sir—me father was a farmer till he died, and me mother's alive and on the shore of Shannon, an' I've come to the college to be a lawyer."

"Follow me, my good fellow," said the Professor, a leonine, little figure; "you're a first year man, and I'll see that your name is enrolled." And Finn, with his now crownless hat, his slit coat hanging on his left arm, and his head tingling with pain, followed, stopping twice to turn upon the gibbering students and to shake his fist at them.

The enrolment was soon over. He passed through a class-room with benches rising from a professorial platform to the windows, and entered an ante-room, where a lanky gentleman, with an eye-glass, sat behind a note-book and a little heap of cheques.

"Payable only to Professor Dacy," Finn read in the corner of one at the edge of the table, but he did not understand the meaning of it.

"This is a first year man, Dacy. Put down his name. The boys, you perceive, have been handling him. Good day to you, Mr. O'Brien. Keep up your pecker. You'll live to break half their heads yet."

"Thank-ye to you, sir ; I hope and believe, please God, that I will."

"What classics have ye, Mr. O'Brien ?" asked the Professor at the table, throwing a gown back over his shoulder and untwisting a red silk sash, which lay uncomfortably across his back.

"The ancient tongues, if you please," said Finn, using an expression of Father Hugh's.

"The most ancient or the more ancient ?" asked the Professor, goggling at the pupil, and permitting a smile to appear in the corner of his lips.

"I suppose, sir, they spoke Greek and Latin in the Garden of Eden."

"And Erse," said the Professor.

"And Irish, of course, first of all."

"But they spoke Sanscrit before the whole of them, my man."

"I believe ye, sir ; but it's Latin and Greek I want," said Finn, passing his arm through

his hat as if the one were a piston and the other a cylinder.

“Are you for Maynooth or the bar, sir?”

“The bar.”

“Mr. O’Brien,” wrote the Professor.

“How much?” asked Finn.

“As much as you like to give me; there’s only two dozen of you altogether, and if you can increase the fees, I’ll be most happy.”

Finn laid down his bundle of notes, the Professor picked out the amount, and Finn got a ticket of class-attendance for the year. He bowed and was moving off, when the Professor’s voice arrested him.

“Just wait a minute. What O’Briens are you?”

“The Loop Head O’Briens, please, sir, the oldest of the stock.”

“Are you a son of O’Brien, of Castle Boffin?”

“No, sir, our castle’s on the Shannon side of Clare; it’s not very big at all at all, but it suits me mother and me, and all our people.”

“Is there a coinage of the realm at Loop Head? Or do you transact business in kind?”

"Neighbours, are kind enough to each other, sir."

"Look here, Mr. O'Brien; these notes are a hundred years old or so. They're of no use to me, or you either. They're notes of Carey's Bank, and I believe, but I'm not versed in business, that they became useless some time in the middle of last century. A sugar bag is as good value as these. The bank is broken."

"They've been in the family, sir, for untold periods. You're after makin' a mistake."

Finn was in a pitiable plight between his valueless notes and his cut coat; but the Professor observing, "Never mind, Mr. O'Brien. I'll keep your name on the list. Come to the introductory lecture to-morrow," he went out in a more reassured frame of mind.

As he passed across the quadrangle, he picked up the tails of his father's coat, and having aimed a large stone at a small student standing in a doorway, he went quietly home over the Loughan.

His Aunt O'Brien was again dressed in silks and ribbons when he reached the shebeen at Loughan village. She was talking earnestly

to a strongly-built seaman-like man, who beneath a blue rug jacket seemed to have three or four flannel vests. His jacket was adorned with strong horn buttons; his neck was wrapped in a handsome silk handkerchief, and his blue plush breeches, blue stockings, and new brogues, gave him the appearance of a well-to-do pilot out for a holiday. He was pouring spirits into a large tumbler regardless of measurement, and Finn noticed that he paid nothing for his drink.

“Finn O’Brien, is that the style you’re after comin’ home in from the college! Sure you’re torn limb from limb, me darlin’ Finn. This is a great man what you see before you. It’s King Conran, no less: King of the Claddagh, last year, and this year, and they say as long as he likes to remain it. He’s the gentleman what rules the Connemara shore and the Bay of Galport, and the islands, and the sea beyond. He’s an admiral, and a priest, and a judge, and a father to the people of the Claddagh. Make your bow to him, Finn O’Brien.”

The royal personage turned upon the youth, and held out a brown tarry hand. His face

was not wanting in the kingly habit of command—it was tanned, brown, and wrinkled; the eyes of a lowering habit, the mouth large and the jaws massive. He looked Finn keenly over, and turning half round to the aunt, said, “For an O’Brien he has been finely handled.” Then looking at the battered hat, the ruined coat, and the pale face of Finn, he asked,

“Was it the Protestants, me boy?”

“Or the Squireens?” added his aunt.

“It was the whole college of Galport, King Conran; and if I live to be a million, I’ll wipe out the insult to me father’s name and habiliments.”

“Spoken like an Irishman,” said the King, emptying his glass. “Mrs. O’Brien—the next meetin’,”—and he whispered into her ear, so that Finn did not hear—“and this young gentleman will attend it. You take me, Mrs. O’Brien: we have a little meetin’ behind the bar to arrange one or two things about the release of Ireland. Whisht!”

A car stopped at the door, the King passed out, and Mrs. O’Brien, catching her nephew in her arms, prayed that the God of the West might raise him up as an instrument of deliverance

CHAPTER V.

FINN REALISES THAT HE IS AN IRISHMAN.

FINN had been so roughly handled in the quadrangle of the college that his aunt insisted on his keeping his bed for a day. He had got a blow on the neck in addition to the pulling of his hair, and was so stiff and uncomfortable, that he was quite grateful to his aunt for proposing that he should not get up. That kind woman went further, and even called in a doctor's assistant who was riding past, and had him in to feel the new bumps on Finn's head.

"You'll throw it off like winking," said the doctor; "it's a head that'll not break for any shillelagh cut in Connemara. My respects to you, Mrs. O'Brien; that never paid the Saxon a farthing of duty."

And the doctor went away, leaving Finn comforted. He had a basin of chicken soup

brought to him twice over, and Mrs. O'Brien promised that Father O'Clery should not miss seeing him in the evening; so Finn passed his time agreeably enough, without going to Professor Dacy's lecture. In the evening, true enough, the priest came in. He was a little depressed in the countenance, for he had been that day to Galport and seen a new bishop who had become a teetotaler, who wished the clergy of his diocese to become teetotal, and show their flocks by personal example how they were to avoid one of the greatest occasions to sin.

When Finn came to him out of his little room, he was holding his decanter in mid-air, and explaining to Mrs. O'Brien that there was no warrant for abstinence—none whatever—in the pagan authors, the early fathers of the church, or in holy writ. "Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake, Mrs. O'Brien. And if a little wine, why not a few spirits? And more particularly, why not spirits which are distilled like the honey of the flowers on the mountain sides of Connemara, and which come to me as cheap as the honey to the bee?"

"Why not, indeed?" said Mrs. O'Brien,

hovering between the priest and the counter of the shebeen.

It was at this juncture that Finn, still crest-fallen, his tattered coat on his arm, and his rimless hat in his hand, showed himself to the priest.

"I see ye, Finn O'Brien. If ye think ye can conduct yourself to the woolsack, by means of a shillelagh ye're mistaken. No man of eminence ever arrived at it by brute force—not in our day."

"Saving your presence, Father John, I would curse the woolsack. See me now. Look at me hat, me father's habiliments, and feel me head and neck. I've fallen upon a nest of Protestants and Squireens, and they trate me, without provocation, in that manner."

"Sit down, Finn O'Brien. You're young, and if you see me take a decanter it's no reason why you should follow my example. But a noggin is neither here nor there. Get your glass. You need a word in season, me poor countryman of Loop Head. You've had a sorry first day's experience of the city of Galport. And to judge from the angry expression of your countenance, I should suppose

that you may have had some share in bringing misfortune on yourself. Was there no boastful speech on your tongue? Was there no rubbing the back of the Protestant cat the wrong way, Finn O'Brien? Is all the blame on the other side?"

Finn told him the whole day's experience, including the incident of the valueless notes, which Father John said, to his confusion, he had discovered for himself, having foolishly offered the one he had received in a Protestant shop, and having been profanely laughed at for his pains.

Then there was a long silence, broken by Father O'Clery, who remarked,

"And I hope you cut some of them well, Finn O'Brien."

"Thank ye, Father John," said Finn, who was languishing over his noggin, under the dispiriting sense that he was being lectured. "Believe me, I laid more than ten men low before I was tied up to the tree. And the strength of me stick was known to ten more of them. I made a good fight of it. I was as good as a whole faction myself."

"I'm glad to hear it, Finn O'Brien, and I

believe that it is not unchristian or unpriestlike on my part to say that if their cursed Protestant pates tingle from now till the blessed Christmas day, it will serve them right. Finn, me boy, your lot is not cast in pleasant places. You're born in a time that is out of joint, and oh cursed spite! there is not an Irishman to set it right. Stand up, Finn O'Brien, and recite me something—Dan's attack on the Jew, if you have it in your mind, or Grattan's reply again. It brings tears to me eyes that reply of Grattan's, it is so replete with noble passion and fire corrected by the dignity of the true Irish gentleman."

"Grattan's Reply," said Finn, retreating to a corner of the room, and repeating the performance of the previous evening.

There were tears in the eyes and a quiver in the voice of Father John when he began once more to talk. "Oh, Master O'Brien, it wrenches the cords of me heart and makes me bowels yearn to see a fine young scion of the ancient stock come to this capital of the West only to be insulted. But your experience of the English, and of the Anglo-Irish, and of the Irish who imitate the English and the Anglo-

Irish, would lead you to expect unfairness. And my worthy friend, Hugh Kenealy, will have instructed you in your duty with regard to the treatment awarded to such as we are by the hounds who hold the land and the administration of this unfortunate country."

"Father Hugh is all for turning the cheek to the smiter. There was an Englishman out of Limerick came to gather birds' eggs and guillemots' skins—a real bold hound, Father John—and he offended all Ballybunion with his airs and his orders. Well, what do ye think? We had arranged a nice little fall to his pride like. When he was fifty feet down the cliff, the rope that was round the pole was to give way like, and him and his airs and orders were to get a header all the length of the cliff. Well, what do ye think? Father Hugh, he hears—I believe from me own mother—that the Englishman would never come back to Ballybunion to curse and swear and drink. And who do we see galloping up the moss, just as me knife was raised to perform the feat, but Father Hugh, shouting, hallooing, imploring, roaring, until we thought the devil was after him, and we all took to our heels. And he helped the

hound up the cliff, and sent him back to Limerick by a roundabout way to avoid Ballybunion."

"It might have been an unwarrantable interference, Finn O'Brien, on the part of Father Hugh: in the interests of the Catholic Church and dear country, we may sometimes require that an Englishman should find his level. I will not argue the point; I will not criticise the occasion. I will admit, however, that you have the basis of patriotism in your nature."

"Indeed I have," said Finn, hitting the table with both his elbows, making a wave of punch ripple over the glass of the priest. It was a proof of the priest's earnestness that he regarded the incident leniently, and went on with his talk.

"I have to warn ye, Finn O'Brien, that your stout arm and your loyalty will bring you, in a city like this—ay, even in a suburb of a city like this—under the eye of two parties. You will be observed by the police, and by the secret societies. Now I am an Irishman, and as such I am a patriot, and I cannot refuse my sympathy to a young brother who should strike a generous blow for his poor country. But as one of the servants of the holy Catholic

Church, I have nothing to say for the secret societies.* If you are asked to join a circle of a brotherhood, I can only observe that the holy Catholic Church does not sanction it. But I am an Irishman and a servant of my country, and I desire to see my country free from tyranny and oppression, and, if the secret societies are not thrust upon me, I am blind to them ecclesiastically. Politically, I may even give my approval to them. Do ye know what a circle is, Finn O'Brien?"

Father John rose and put the fastenings on the windows. He went to the door and listened: Mrs. O'Brien was sewing behind her bar: he sat down again.

"When I turned the corner of the road yesterday, and watched the steamboat sailing out of 'Friars' Cut' into the lough, a man made upon me on the road and said, 'You have a coat torn off your back and a shillelagh mark on your neck—it's high time you were a brother;' and he disappeared as fast as he came into view."

* "Oh, Babylon, Babylon, reveal your secrets not all too hastily," besought the priest with his hands clasped.

“My son, I fear for you; you pick up your experiences so quickly. And Galport—the Babylon of Ireland—is full of deceit and wickedness, and you will need all your moral courage—moral courage far more than your physical, which I believe is not inconsiderable,—to resist the temptations in your way. I will allow you another noggin, Finn O’Brien.”

Finn filled his glass, and the priest, leaning back in his chair, his hands clasped, his eyes closed, was the very image and picture of reflective despair. “Poor Ireland, poor Ireland!” he exclaimed. “In the divine order of the world, she has been selected as the recipient of many trials. Oh, what a history is hers! Beautiful mother country, washed by seas of the richest fecundity, shone upon by the warmest of suns, inhabited by the most vivacious of the world’s races! Finn O’Brien, there was a day, and it was centuries long, when all the island of Ireland lived like one family. On that day, from north to south, it was nothing but O’Dochertys or O’Driscolls, O’Donnells or M’Carthys, O’Connors or O’Clerys, O’Briens or O’Molloys—not so much as one Saxon between Cape Clear and

the Giant's Causeway, not so much as one Dane or Norman or Englishman—all the true, fine Celtic family, living in peace, prosperity, and contentment. Oh, Finn O'Brien, that was a day, when your father and mine had their lands in common, and one man's harvest was another man's harvest, and all worked together to a general end. No nakedness then! No hunger! No thirst! No famine! No eviction! And our holy Catholic Church reared her abbeys and palaces and cathedrals, and monks wrote hymns of praise and men sang for spiritual joy, and Ireland praised the God of Hosts with one voice. Oh, Finn O'Brien, that was a day, when the saints launched their curraghs on these stormy seas and carried from island to island the evangel of peace from Rome. And into this garden of Eden, with our monks at their missals, and our chiefs of the tribes cultivating the land for the good of all, there came the swine of England, the Saxon swine who have never left it since, thinking themselves stronger, and seizing our lands—wiser, and changing our laws—more religious, and giving us a new church. Oh, poor Ireland! for eight centuries fighting to

return to Paradise, to return to her own dear Church, to her own land habits, to her own laws and families. And the Saxon swine are with us yet, dragooning us out of barracks—dragooning the princely houses of O'Docherty, O'Driscoll, O'Donnel, M'Carthy, O'Connor, O'Clery, O'Brien, O'Molloy, with shopmen from London and clowns from their Midlands of England. I declare to you, Finn O'Brien, when I walk among the dolmens and cromlechs of the Loughan shore, and hear the whisper of the wind among our ruined priories and our crosses crumbling in the winter snows, I go on my knees and cry to the Almighty in anguish of spirit. I ask, is there no way back to the old estate of Irishmen, is the angel Gabriel always to be standing at the gate with flaming falchion, while tyrants rule over us? And as often I have risen from my knees, the prophetic vision in me mind, and felt that a day is coming for Ireland—some day—a day that will restore us our old ruling families as they were before Brian Boru and Roderick O'Connor, give us back our castles and wine cellars, our priories and chapels, our skilled men in gold and brass and silver, our old

religious Ireland, our Ireland of the scholars, of the saints, of the men of action—and it comforts me.”

“Thank ye, Father John,” said Finn, wiping his eyes, “and your vision will help me to be an Irishman all my days to the end of them and after.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECRET SOCIETY.

FINN was not so happy in the great capital of the West as he had expected to be. Loop Head had its disadvantages, but, on the whole, his uneventful life between the Shannon and the cliff had not been without its joys. At least he was on friendly terms with all the neighbourhood; the only vexations he had were mild, temporary ones, which disappeared in bluster.

In Galport and Loughan there was a freezing atmosphere which was not merely winter weather—it was man's unkindness to him. At college he was the butt of an incessant ridicule; for, as yet, he had been unable to exchange his coat for another one, and the long patch down the back was a constant reminder to the students how he had been slit up on the first day of his arrival. He had got into a

little trouble too; for one day, having risen to translate a portion of Virgil, he made so many false quantities and odd blunders in reading that he was greeted with a guffaw of laughter from all the benches. It was his custom to carry with him his shillelagh, and in a moment he had raised it and brought it down upon the head of a scoffer with a resounding whack. The scoffer ceased to scoff, and, dropping his Virgil, grew so exceeding pale in the face that it was a question at first whether he was not going to die on the spot. His jaw fell in so alarming a manner, and his eyes put on so death-like a glassiness, that Professor Dacy, in alarm, flung the contents of a water-jug across the benches at him. The water drenched the wrong man, however; and the insensible student would not awake.

Nor could shaking by the elbow and the cuff of the collar do anything for him; he really seemed on the point of giving up the ghost.

"O'Brien," said the Professor, "you are a ruffian—a wild, pauper ruffian. You haven't paid your fees yet, and you think you can indulge in the luxury of assassination under my very nose. This will be a hanging matter."

“Divil a fear of it, Professor Dacy!” roared Finn, somewhat appeased by the collapse of the scoffer and the sudden change of the class-room from jeering to consternation, spying at the same time, as he thought, signs of returning consciousness. “Divil a fear of it, Professor! The Martin has better stuff in him than that, bedad, though he did laugh in me face in the most provoking and unwarranted manner.”

True enough, the Martin came out of his faint, and put up his right hand so ruefully to his enlarged pate that a roar of laughter greeted his awakening.

But the Professor was not to be so appeased. He called Finn into his little ante-room at the end of the hour, and explained to him that he was a student on sufferance, not, as yet, having paid any fees; that instead of adopting that defiant attitude, he should be the humblest member of the class; and that it was a question whether he had not earned rustication by his abominable and odious behaviour. Finn argued the matter with the Professor, which only made him more angry; for he tore the LL.D. ribbon from his shoulders and leapt out of his gown in a fury, exclaiming,

“Pay your fees, sir, pay your fees! Bring honest pound notes to the college and abandon your savage impertinence. I will have none of it at your hands, you miserable hound! You give a vulgar tone to the whole class. You lower the dignity of our academe by your market-manners.”

Nor was it at college only that Finn found himself treated in a forbidding way. The peasant farmers who met him on the road between Loughan and Galport often scowled at him. He was taken for a Protestant, for an Ulster man, for a limb of the law, and frequently mud was tossed at him from behind a wall or from the door of a cabin. Children pointed miniature guns at him, and from the allusions which were made to the slit in his coat he judged that some punishment was preparing for him. All this was a little unintelligible to him, because on his first arrival, and when it was known that he lived at popular Mrs. O'Brien's of Loughan, he was smiled upon and regarded cordially. At last the secret came out. He was on his road home from college one night; the way was dark, and he was keeping the side-path to avoid vehicles

and the chance of being run over. About a quarter of a mile from Loughan, he overheard a couple of voices discoursing in the dark. "Anyhow," said one voice, "a bullet in his calf is neither here nor there."

"But you're in too great a hurry," said the other voice; "give the lad time—give him a week or two at any rate before you shoot."

"I tell ye, it's no use. If he's not a spoy and informer in disguise, I'm a Dutchman; and he's in the very citadel of the West—occupies the very apartment where Lodge No. XII. holds its meetings with the king in the chair. Do ye think he would have been there a day without knowing the signs, if he was a true son of the shamrock? Don't ye suppose when Hudy O'Harrigan gave him a password thrice at the cross-roads, and all he said was, 'Does your mother know you're out,' that if he had knowed it, he would not have used it?"

"Hudy has a provoking manner with him."

"Ay, but he's a true son, and recognises one when he sees him, and this O'Brien don't know the pass-word. He's just occupying the citadel because Mrs. O'Brien is a good soul,

and thinks she owes something to her brother's memory. And as soon as the time comes, he'll turn on us all. By the Lord, he won't get the chance—his hours are numbered, the dastardly craven !”

This conversation had not a reassuring effect upon Finn ; he crept home that night by a circuitous way. Only he understood the meaning of a bullet whistling through his hat, two nights later, as he was whistling his own way home to Loughan. “Some one's watching for me life, Aunt O'Brien,” said the lad, trembling with excitement and pointing to the scorched hole in his hat. “I think I'll go home to me mother's house and begin farming. I'm not liked here, and they all liked me at Ballybunion. Me poor mother, she would be glad to get me back !”

“Whisht with ye, Finn O'Brien, you, with the blood of a thousand years in ye, to talk of returning to the pig and the plough. If ye will leave the college and throw up your famous prospects, is there not the hotel here, and are you not my heir, me dear brother's only son, and his image and superscription to the beat of the bargain? Whisht with ye,

Finn O'Brien, ye haven't the pass-words. The king will be here to-morrow night, and you'll be safe in every hole and corner of Ireland. Good e'en to ye, Father John; I sent the duck over. Is it John Jamieson ye preferred? Very good."

Next night there was a gathering of twelve men in the room off the bar of Mrs. O'Brien's shebeen. Finn had been advised to spend the early part of the evening at the priest's; he would be sent for, said his aunt, when he was wanted. It was Theresina who brought him word, and who, walking over with him in the dark, whispered,

"I'm watchin' the village. You'll be all safe, Master O'Brien."

He was surprised to find the metamorphosis which had made his quiet study off the bar parlour look like a gun-room. To each end of the table a barrel had been placed, and cross-planks covered with a tarpaulin made the centre for deliberation. The windows were padded with blankets, and two candles fizzling in bottles showed the only light which the room contained. It was hot almost to suffocation, and through the steam Finn saw, with a

little trepidation, twenty-four gleaming eyes turn upon him. King Conran, dressed as he had seen him on the first occasion, stood at the table-head. A pistol, at full cock, was in his hand; a pistol, at half cock, lay at the elbow of each member of the brotherhood. At first sight it did not seem certain that he was not going to be assassinated out of hand, so menacing were the glances, so ominous the movement of the thumb upon King Conran's weapon.

"Draw aside the screen," said the King. The edge of the tarpaulin was lifted; a flat box was drawn out, and a cross composed of three daggers was set up on end.

"Kiss the hilt and blade," said the King.

Finn kissed, as he was bid, and asked no questions.

"Kneel," said the King, and a sputtering candle was held over him. Finn knelt.

"Swear by the hilt and blade—swear, I tell ye, Finn O'Brien; in the rear of me voice re-pate, I swear—'I swear'—by the hilt and blade from the holy coffin of Athenry—'by the hilt and blade of the coffin of Athenry'—the *holy* coffin—'by the holy coffin of Athenry'—by

the *hilt and blade* of the holy coffin of Athenry —‘by the hilt and blade of the holy coffin of Athenry’—taken from the tomb of the last of the O’Connors—‘taken from the’—not at all, that’s only me explaining—that I become a brother—‘that I become a brother’—of Lodge No. XII. of my free will—‘of Lodge No. XII. of my free will’—to deliberate therein for the good of the land, of the church, and of Ireland—‘to deliberate therein for the good of the land, of the church, and of Ireland’—to help wrest the land from the cursed tyrants who hold it—‘to help wrest the land from the cursed tyrants who hold it’—to help remove the enemies of the church—‘to help remove the enemies of the church’—to help dig the graves of the foes of Ireland by sword, gun, or pistol—‘to help dig the graves of the foes of Ireland by sword, gun, or pistol’—on highway or byway, field, moss, or mountain—‘on highway or byway, field, moss, or mountain’—in house, on horseback, in ship or train—‘in house, on horseback, in ship or train’—wherever the bloody foe may be encountered—‘wherever the bloody foe may be encountered’—So help me God. God save

Ireland—"So help me God. God save Ireland."

Whether it was that there was something peculiarly fervid and innocent in Finn's voice I cannot say, but it seemed to touch the assembled brotherhood. Some of them looked as if they would shed tears upon the barrels of their pistols. One by one they took him by the hand, and shook it till he lost all definite sensation of it in a multiplicity of electric tingles.

"You take Patrick Macmahon's place, Finn O'Brien. He goes to Manhattan on the business of the lodge; God in heaven bless you, Macmahon. Good bye." And Macmahon, shaken by the hand, passed out of the shebeen to America.

"Is there much to do?" resumed the King; "show me the documents."

The documents were produced from the breeches' pocket of a short man, with a frieze coat, who travelled through the West of Ireland, soliciting orders of tradesmen for a bog-oak shop in Dublin. He was the go-between of the Central Lodge of the Brotherhood in Dublin and the Galport branches.

He handed the papers up the table, and King Conran, who could not read, scrutinised them one by one. "O'Brien, your predecessor who has left us this night for America was secretary of the lodge. Take his pistol and his ink-horn, and read them aloud."

Finn took the papers; they were leaves of a school copy-book, and in copperplate he read the heading, "Unity is Strength."

"Unity is Strength," repeated half the lodge in the tone of a religious chant. "It's the new pass-word for the West," explained the King.

"It's nothing at all, I think," replied Finn; "only a copy-book heading."

"He's right," explained the little traveller. "I know for a fact from the central lodge that, owing to there being no arrests or discoveries through the detection of the signs now in use, they are not to be changed yet awhile."

"Proceed, O'Brien, with the documents," said the King.

"Decree of removal against Mrs. Lynch. Six families turned out in the cold, without

provision of food, furniture, or clothing, from her estate at St. Columbkille. Captain Owen's removal will in the first instance do. She acts under his advice."

"It'll be a slow business, but sure. Eileen was admitted to the barracks, she soft-sawthered the colonel, and next week we'll have a spy in the very officers' mess. Larry O'Shee takes up the job. Proceed with the documents." Finn read:—"Advice concerning Galport College. Lay hold of as many students as can be obtained. Form societies within the college of Catholics against Protestants; of farmers' sons and dependants; let them form an annoyance committee, but leave sanguinary action to the members of lodges."

"You are deputed to take up that work in the college, Secretary O'Brien," observed the little traveller; "the lodge will now better understand the policy of the Dublin centre, in advising the establishment of annoyance committees in the barracks at last meeting. This is a pendant to the order of the previous month."

"Proceed, Secretary O'Brien."

“The Lodge will be on its guard against three men suspected of rendering information to the police at Lough Head, St. Columbkille, and the Claddagh ; their names are as follows—Denis O’Rourke, innkeeper, Daniel Joyce, storekeeper, James O’Halloran, gamekeeper, all professed friends of the cause, though not admitted to lodges. Let them be posted.”

“Posted,” was the shout raised from every lip, with a simultaneous click of pistols which made Finn leap involuntarily.

“On highway or byway, field, moss, or mountain,” said the King in a sepulchral voice.

“On highway or byway, field, moss, or mountain.”

“By sword, gun, or pistol,” said the King.

“By sword, gun, or pistol,” chanted the Brotherhood—one tall brother adding on his own account, “and by stone, p’ison, or knife, begorra, if they don’t do.”

“Is there any more business?” asked the King.

“None,” replied the traveller, “except that I’m counselled to say that the new chief-secretary is a very lax man, and that the

police-departments are all playing leap-frog at the Castle, and we can do what we like till another Government have him out and put in a successor, with less taste for the voice of the country, and more love for repression."

"Are we all over then?"

"All over."

"What does Terry say? Terry darlin', whisper!" said a brother at the casement of Finn's bed-room.

"Safe," said a voice from the outside, recognisable by Finn as Theresina's. Whereupon twelve pistols went off at once; the room smelt like the ante-room to Tartarus, and Finn, nearly dead with the start he got at the perpetration of this unaccustomed rite, backed to the door and held his hand to his heart.

"Courage, O'Brien," said the King, motioning him to pass out at the door. "It frightens the traitors in the village; there's not a policeman within ear-shot, nor Terry would know it. Now you are a passed Irishman. Is it asleep that ye are, Mrs. O'Brien, at your own bar? Asleep with one eye open? Well, all want two in one glass and away

home quiet. A fine meetin', Mrs. O'Brien. And only half an hour of it. How is Eileen? Nicely. Up to the eyes in the cause. What, Terry, policemen? Every pistol in the blankets and the blankets up into the roof!"

CHAPTER VII.

TASMANIA.

“EVERYTHING comes to the man who can wait,” says a proverb devised for the extinction of youthful haste. Finn waited some months and a new coat came to him. It was in this wise. Perusing the announcements on the black board at the entrance porch of the college one day, and enjoying the magnanimous threats which he had himself composed in the name of the Annoyance Committee, he saw an advertisement for a tutor. The tutor was to give two hours of his time each day to instructing a little boy of seven, and in return for his services, he was to receive three guineas a month. Application was to be made at Tasmania, where, on approval of the little boy, the tutor was to be engaged.

Three guineas were a consideration for Finn. He had not yet paid his fees. He had sent

back Carey's notes to his mother, who replaced them in her rafters and regarded them with the same veneration which she had always entertained towards them. For her, at least, they had not lost their value. Were the notes not visibly there, unaltered, whatever might have happened to the house which originally sent them out?

Finn, as secretary of No. XII., was not quite without funds; but it had not occurred to him that they might be put to personal use. At the sight of the advertisement, however, it did occur to him that he might allow himself a little credit—enough to substitute for his father's habiliments such a coat as he saw the officers wear, and as the young gentlemen at the college, nearly all without exception, wore. He persuaded himself that, without such a coat, no annoyance committee could be formed in the college; for there was as yet no relationship between him and his fellow-students except of satire, and could be none till the slit garment was superseded.

Finn thought he might broach the subject to a brother; so, ascending a staircase, at the head of which three brass balls glittered in

the sun, he represented to a brother who was standing behind a pile of slops how the Annoyance Committee hung fire, and he thought nothing could be done till he set *himself* right with the prevailing fashions of Galport.

“But your present habiliments are the insignia of Ould Ireland. The sight of ye, Mr. O’Brien, with your strappin’ figure clad in the ancient costume of the West, goes to the heart of us all. It does indeed, I can assure you.”

“Why don’t you all wear it then yourselves?” asked Finn, hotly, adding, with more prudence, “Fegs, then, Mr. Sheehy, and I desire to preserve my father’s garments as a heirloom in me family. And me mother writes me from Ballybunion to say that since they left the trunk under her bed she’s never had a night’s unbroken rest. I must send them back to her.”

“Step in here,” said the brother. “These came in from the barracks yesterday, a full suit as good as new. They’re a captain’s lounging suit when he’s off duty—meant to kill, too, the blagyards,—to kill the Irish misses.

Step into them, Master O'Brien, before the governor comes back. He doesn't know they're in yet." Finn stepped into the tweed morning-coat, vest, and trousers, and, involuntarily began to feel the corner of his moustache, and to swagger.

"By gun, or sword, or pistol," said Mr. Sheehy, impressed by the appearance of the secretary of the lodge.

"So help me God, God save Ireland!" said Finn, putting on a wide-awake, "and I regret that I have to change me clothes, but it's all for the cause."

"I'll just put up your father's things, and the carrier will take them as far as Kilcree, and your mother will find them there. We can afford to give you credit here, Master O'Brien. And, after all, it's more like a gentleman of the college than the other raiment. Quick, now, get behind them bales, and I'll let you out the other way. Here's the governor himself."

Finn got into the street and had a hat tossed after him. He put it on and set out in search of Tasmania.

Tasmania was a manor-house surrounded

by a lofty cluster of elms and beeches, above which noisy coveys of rooks were flying, as Finn passed the lodge-gate. There were two substantial wings to the house and a solid pillared front. The lawn undulated towards a lake which was edged with thickets; there were swans paddling on the lake. On the verge of the lawn there were plantations everywhere, but over the top of them he saw the Atlantic stretching to the horizon, in an expanse of billowy blue.

The hall-door opened upon him suddenly, and a magnificent vision of gold-laced livery loomed on the steps above him.

"This way, sir," said the vision in livery, as if Finn had been expected for the last hour, at least, and in a few seconds he found himself inside a spacious drawing-room, on the hearth of which great logs were crackling and blazing.

The drawing-room was a new revelation of splendour to Finn; as yet he had seen nothing in his experience to compare with it. But he had no time to think of his surroundings before a farther door opened and a kindly soprano voice resounded through the room,—

"Owen, this is too much of a good thing. I shall have to turn you out. Upon my word, I shall." And before Finn could expostulate or explain, the Widow Lynch had advanced upon him, and was vigorously pinching his arm.

"Faith, madam, but you mistake me for somebody, more's the pity," responded Finn, looking down upon the widow.

In the dusk he could not make out the features of her face, but he perceived an undulating figure, which had made a silky rush across the floor, and the pinching of the arm was done by a pair of firm, strong fingers. Withal, there was just the faintest odour of violets in the air, which had come in with her.

"You ridiculous Irishman, who are you?" ejaculated the soprano voice, the owner returning to the hearthrug, when Finn saw, from the blaze of the pine-logs on her face, that the mistress of Tasmania seemed a mere girl.

At that moment a footman brought in a tall lamp, and looking at Finn nearly capsized it among a collection of albums and music.

"An Irishman, madam, but not ridiculous,"

observed Finn, sententiously, bowing after the manner of a previous century to the young lady.

“Well, then, Irishman, I thought you were somebody else. I see how it is, however; you run up bills with the same tailor as the person I thought you resembled. After all, you don’t resemble him very much. And you’re not so very ridiculous, for an Irishman.”

Finn accepted the compliment with his hand upon his heart. At the moment he remembered a play he had seen at Kildree, performed in a high tent at the river-side, where a gorgeous lady, when she addressed a man such as himself, always exacted that attitude in exchange for a remark.

With his hand on his heart he raised his eyes to Mrs. Lynch, and concluded once for all that no angel of beauty and grace had ever descended upon earth to equal her.

She was still standing upon the hearth-rug, and Finn felt that she was quizzing him; for was there not a satirical smile in her azure eyes? No wonder, thought Finn, he had perceived an odour of violets. Here was a bank of them incarnated!

He could not stand the light of her laughing glance. It overcame him, and he looked to her feet, which fascinated him by their twinkling prettiness, as much as the white columnar neck, the delicate ears, the chestnut hair, and the glowing purity of her complexion. The whole figure was so unlike anything he had ever seen. The moulding of the face was so different, not cast from the chin upwards, but from the brow downwards; it was a Saxon and not an Irish face, and Finn should have disliked it; but the little feet, and the sinuous figure, and the laughing eyes, arrested him and demanded instant admiration, which he instantly yielded.

"Yes," said the widow slowly, looking at the lad's sentimental posture, "even for an Irishman you are just a little ridiculous."

"Madam, if you insist, I have no other alternative than to believe it."

The widow laughed outright, and looking at him straight in the face, said,

"You are really a very agreeable Irishman. Has Captain Owen sent you?"

"No, madam, my attention was directed to an advertisement at the Queen's College

gate this morning with regard to a tutorship. *I have called to offer myself in that capacity.*"

"I thought you had come about the hunt at Athenry, or from the Angling-club," said Mrs. Lynch, with the least accent of disappointment.

"The salmon are very plentiful this year, madam. Above Loughan Castle, just at the entrance of Lough Loughan, they are running up in shoals and thousands. I've watched them leaping till my heart was like to break because I hadn't a fishing in the river."

"Then you sympathise with sporting people. What is your name?"

"O'Brien, madam,—Finn O'Brien, of Loop Head."

"It's a formidable address. Do you live at the light-house, or how?"

"No, madam, at Ballybunion. My people have always been connected with the land. My mother still holds the estate and works it, though my father is dead."

"I am so sorry."

"He died a long time ago, madam."

"So sorry that you should have to work; I am sure you would rather fish and hunt than

teach little boys. Only, my boy is a very nice boy. You will like him much. He doesn't get on with everybody; but I am sure he will with you. The difficulty with him is that he is older than his years, and doesn't like to be treated as a child. He makes me feel quite an old woman."

"Your looks belie your feeling, madam," said Finn, with ready gallantry.

"Mr. O'Brien," said the widow, laughing again, "you really mustn't. I'm not used to it. It makes me feel queer. I wasn't brought up in the school of compliments. Besides, you ridiculous Irishman, what right have you to come here, asking to teach my boy his lessons for three guineas monthly, and pay me compliments as if—as if——"

She sat down to the piano, and regardless of Finn's hurt feelings, asked him if he liked opera, and without waiting to hear a reply, dashed into "Robert the Devil."

"It's a diabolical opera," she said, having sung "Toi que J'aime" until Finn felt so flabby and love-sick that he was obliged to stare into the ceiling.

At that moment the door opened, and a

sturdy little fellow dressed in velveteen, with fair curls on his shoulders, burst into the room. He had an old carbine in his hand, and immediately pointed it at Finn. Finn, who had once shot a boy's ear off by a similar frolic, dashed over a footstool and snatched the carbine out of his hand.

"I believe you're a damned Fenian," said the boy, looking at him steadily.

"Morris Lynch," said the widow, "you've been with the gamekeeper again. Mr. O'Brien, you may let him have the carbine; there's nothing in it."

"Isn't there nothing in it?" asked Morris. "There's a bullet in it, and a cartridge in it, and a cap on it, and I believe he's a damned Fenian."

"You're a brave boy," said Finn, pocketing the cap and restoring the carbine, which the butler adroitly removed from the boy's arm, being chased and kicked through the hall for his pains.

"By the way, of course you're quite safe, Mr. O'Brien. I don't understand your Irish politics and parties, but you're not a conspirator or anything of that sort, are you?"

Morris has such swift instincts, and often so correct, that I should really not be surprised if you were a Fenian, without the d—a—m ! Tell me, are you loyal and all that ? ”

“ Madam, don’t you believe in the nonsense the Squireens are talking about secret societies. I know better. I am of the old breed of Irishmen, and know my countrymen. If there are secret societies, they are not directed against lovely ladies ; they are for the extinction of tyrants and oppressors.”

“ I hope you are not a Fenian. The major used to say that all Irishmen are Fenians at heart ; but if they are all as little Fenians in fact as the major was, poor gentleman ! then it doesn’t matter. But I couldn’t have a plotter about my house. Morris is so quick too.”

“ Believe me, dear lady,” said Finn pathetically, “ I would give me life to save a hair of your head from being injured.”

“ Oh, you inflammable, hyperbolical Irishman. But I think you are quite a good fellow in your way. Come to-morrow in the afternoon, and see what you can do for Morris. Good evening ! ” And the widow bowed

Finn out, roguishly following him to the door, and when he had reached the lawn, the drawing-room window opened, and her clear soprano remarked to him, under the starlight, "You must try not to be so ridiculous."

CHAPTER VIII.

LARRY O'SHEE.

THE gentlemen of a barracks, in lieu of active fighting, are much put to it to find employment. The routine of duties after the first couple of years is not exciting.

Turning raw recruits into automata is very well, so far as it goes; and the mechanical observance of regular hours from dawn to sundown is also very well; but in the absence of war, it is something like a gigantic dress-rehearsal, which never ends in the piece being put upon the stage. Being in a perpetual state of readiness, like other states of nature, is apt to become a perpetual state of boredom.

Certainly the regiment to which Captains Owen and Jeffery belonged, which was in a high state of readiness for marching and delivering blows, wherever a Queen's enemy might show himself in any quantity, was a

bored regiment. Not the men. They were never allowed to lapse into that condition, and were always provided with sufficient variety of labour and drill to make them enjoy a sound sleep, when the guards were mounted for the night, and the bugle sounded for lights out. But the officers were bored to a man.

The colonel was bored because he was in the West of Ireland, and had to lend his men so often for mere duties of police. The major was bored because his wife insisted upon being interesting at periods so ridiculously near each other that he found himself the father of three sons in nineteen months. The senior captain was bored because he had only his pay to live upon, and, though he played whist regularly at the county club, could never make enough to meet his mess expenses. The junior captain was bored because, through the laziness of his seniors and the willingness of his own disposition, he had to undertake a great deal of drudgery not legitimately his. The remainder of the officers—doctor—veterinary—lieutenants, and what not—were bored because they saw others

bored: it was as infectious as scarlatina or measles.

Never, surely, was there so much yawning as in the barracks of Galport, and the expression of subdued melancholy which settled on the brows of nearly all would have done credit to a collection of poets' composing *neniæ* for their own funerals.

It was not till Captain Owen had been introduced to Mrs. Lynch, and Captain Jeffery had seen Eileen, that a brisker tone came into the officers' mess-room.

"Jeff, my boy, give me over that pot of ginger," said Lieutenant Sir Thomas Colthurst one day, recognising the change of tone—he was a youth whose father in a moment of indiscretion had accepted a baronetcy, and who had died of the effort to make it pay its way on four hundred a year. "Jeff, now that old Pyrenees is gone, and the major has retired to sit upon the twins, what do you think about things in general?"

Old Pyrenees was Colonel Malcolm—his nickname was partly the result of his frosty head of hair, partly of his known achievements in Spain.

"I think" (turning to a new waiter) "you must learn to pour out champagne as if it were champagne, and not home-brewed ale—so—do you understand, Larry O'Shee?"

"I do, your honour."

"I think," replied Captain Jeffery, "that if the colt doesn't mind his eye, old Pyrenees may come down on him so smartly for his cheek, some day, that he will be surprised. Eh, Owen?"

Owen was absorbed with a walnut and did not answer.

"A devilish hard English nut to crack, or is it Tasmanian?" asked Dr. Sullivan slyly, his red beard, shone upon at that moment by the lamp, throwing out luminous rays like a reflector.

"Larry O'Shee?"

"Yes, your honour."

"Bring back that bottle. You will observe that when you come to my glass with the champagne, you do not remove the bottle when you see the first effervescence on a level with the edge. Once—twice—thrice—three effervescences, then pass on. Now, Colt, it's your turn."

"Thanks, I never take champagne to fruit. What was ^{it} that you were saying about Tasmania?"

"I was observing," said Sullivan, "that I thought the Captain had a Tasmanian nut to crack."

"There will be a nut of Munster to crack," growled the Captain, "if the pill-box continues to rattle to that tune."

There was a dreadful pause, during which Larry O'Shee closed the mess-room door and the officers were alone.

"He's a smart lad that," said Captain Jeffery. "Do you know his history?"

"Who wants to hear the history of a mess-waiter?" asked the doctor.

"He's a fellow-countryman of yours, Sullivan, and was recommended to me by a princess."

"One of Jeff's romances coming," said Colt, resignedly. "Don't spin it out too long; for, after all, he's but a doubtful acquisition. He's as Irish as old Nick. The wrong end of a thing is always the right end for him. He looks into a top-hat and thinks it was made for the reception of slops. He sees a carving

knife and sheathes it for a sword. He imagines a poker is a toothpick, and he believes truth was created to tell lies about. Go on, Jeff."

"The princess, Colt and brother officers, is no figment of the brain. If you attended to your duty and interested yourselves in the archæology of the magnificent shore that lies at your feet, you would know that a little to the west of the town there is an old Spanish settlement."

"Remains of the Armada, I suppose, which got such a warm reception from the Catholic gentry of these parts."

"An old Spanish settlement, consisting of one long street leading up to a Spanish nunnery. You, Sullivan, who have been in Gibraltar, and you, Owen, who are at this moment in Laputa, with Mrs. Lynch riding in front of you, remember the road between Spanish Town and Algeçiras. On the terraces, behind the roads, there is a little plantation of Cork oaks, and a monastery with one old gentleman in a bald pate eating his way to heaven on grapes and salt fish. Very well, the nunnery of the Claddagh is built among Cork oaks, but instead of being in a state of

dilapidation, it is in high repair. Half a hundred young ladies pray and sing, morning, noon, and night, in it, and save the souls of the thousand or two fisher folks who live along the street. And there is a curious reciprocity between the nunnery and the Claddagh. The Claddagh one time catches more fish than it knows how the deuce to dispose of—then it feeds the nunnery. Another time it catches no fish at all, and begins to starve—then the nunnery, backed by the archbishop, the cardinal, and the pope, feeds it. A fair exchange too; the young ladies do the praying, the fisher-folks do most of the work.”

“Jeff, it’s dry romance, and you’re keeping the Pommery and the Röderer, the cherry-brandy and the Hennessy, the wine of Oporto, and the juice of the grape from Xeres standing in battalion drill round your plate. Colt, descend upon them to right and to left. Tasmania, waken up and see if you can’t put a clapper on Jeff’s tongue. He began about a princess, and he’s now at the pope of Rome.”

Captain Jeffery paused and looked steadily at Dr. Sullivan, the speaker, and as he did not quail so visibly as was desirable, he resumed,

"Into this highly interesting community I entered upon the invitation of the Princess Conran. I was to find her at the large house near the nunnery. I went to the nunnery and looked for a large house. No signs of it. I asked an aged gentleman, with a yellow sou'-wester, for the big house near the nunnery, which belonged to King Conran, where the king and his daughter lived. He only opened his mouth wider and slouched away to the beach. I asked a young Spaniard, with a round, cropped head and a pair of eyes like plums, with no trousers to speak of, and bronzed legs. He had an unpeeled potato in his hand; half of it was between his white teeth. He disappeared behind a dunghill and ruminated over me, while he ate the other half. Then I asked a Spanish maiden, bare to the knees, with a flat basket of fish on her head. She smiled but answered in a foreign tongue."

"Irish, I'll be bound," said Sullivan.

"She answered in a foreign tongue, and it was only when a nun with a chubby face and laughing eyes came from the door of the nunnery that I was shown the large house. It is exactly one foot of chopped straw larger than its

neighbours ; but it stands apart, with a stream of water and a bridge between it and the Claddagh. The nun went in with me, for the door was shut, and I sat down on the throne of King Conran himself. There are three rooms ; one built from the cabin of a wrecked ship, and furnished on maritime principles ; the other two are bed-rooms, and I did not see them. 'Eileen told me about you,' said the nun, with a most secular grin. She was the worldly nun, the one that mediated between the monastery and the town. 'What did she say to you ?' I asked. 'It would flatter you, perhaps, if I told you.' 'But I am used to it from my cradle upwards ; I've always been told that I'm the most magnificent fellow out.' 'You are vain,' said the nun, and upon my word I became aware that she was flirting. 'I am,' I replied ; 'that comes of living in a barracks, where there is no check upon vanity. I suppose in a nunnery there is no vanity ?' 'Not any whatever,' said the nun, and she pushed her foot out. It was a flat, splay foot, but she knew no better. Of course I rewarded her with a glance at it, and gave an approving and unworldly smile. I was thinking all the

time, however, what a poor affair it was compared to Eileen's. 'It must be fatiguing sometimes without a little vanity, mustn't it?' I inquired. 'There is Father Cornelius, and Archbishop Michael,' said the nun, with a knowing glance. 'Are they very vain?' 'Oh, dear no,' she replied, 'but the sisters would rather have their good opinion than not.' 'Is he awfully jolly, Father Cornelius?' 'Jolly does not describe him,' said the nun severely. And upon my word she became at that point absolutely good-looking, with her left forefinger on her cross, and her fresh face screwed into a look of religiosity. 'Of course,' I said, 'I didn't mean jolly. But is he a good fellow to flirt with?' 'Oh, sir,' said the nun, 'you mistake our calling; we are devoted to the Church. Father Cornelius forgives us our sins.' 'Well, I should say that wasn't very difficult. Anybody could do it; I could do it myself. Why, I would back the barracks in a week against all the nunneries in Ireland during the present century for a billet of good-going sins. How do you expect to be able to sin inside these high walls, living in cells-counting beads, reading lives of saints? Only,

of course,' I said, 'the sea-wall isn't very high'—looking out at the king's side window—'and fellows might——' 'Oh, we don't sin in that way,' said the nun sighing. 'Well, I could bet a sovereign,' I said, 'that you are all as spotless as you need be, and no central administration would be so unreasonable as to ask for better behaviour on the part of any of you. I could tell you of sins that would make your hair stand on end. There's a man Owen and a ruffian Sullivan——' 'Please not,' said she, 'and give me the wager for the offertory.' I gave her the sovereign, and Eileen came in at the door just as I handed it."

"It's a devil of a long story," said the ruffian Sullivan, "and after all I can see that nothing happened. You'd much better have put the sovereign down for the subscription concert in the canteen."

"Nothing happened! you should have seen the look these angels gave each other. 'Is it a present you're getting from Captain Blarney-stone?' asked the Princess, her eyes flaming out rays of darkness on her sister of the nunnery. 'For shame, Eileen!' said the nun, 'it is for the offertory.' 'I believe you, Sister

Maria. But did you climb to the Blarney-stone?' 'Eileen,' I said, 'this Christian lady doesn't understand what you mean. When will the King be in?'

"Eileen opened her own bed-room door and her father's, and came back with an unruffled brow."

"'Sister Maria,' she said, 'I've been in the wicked city; think nothing of my ill-temper. Colonel, sir, sit down in me father's chair, and welcome it is you are to the large house beside the nunnery.'"

"Subtle, Jeff, subtle," said Sullivan; "I have half a mind to run away with Sister Maria."

"Wait for a good offertory," said Sir Thomas Colthurst, lighting a cigar. Owen was asleep, and began gently to snore.

"Poor Tasmaniac!" said Jeffery.

"Poor Princess!" said Lieutenant White.

"White's qualifying for a chaplaincy. There was no harm came to the princess. She sat on one side of a table and I sat on the other. And the fish supply to the barracks, improved as you all admit, now comes from the Claddagh."

"And what about the mess-waiter? You are leading up to him, aren't you?"

"Larry O'Shee—oh, to be sure."

"Here, sir," said Larry, either shoved or tumbling in at the door of his own accord, with a tureen under his arm which he was wiping with a table-cloth.

"Get out," shouted a chorus of voices at once, while a shower of cigar ends was cast at the unfortunate tureen.

Larry, tripping on the end of his table-cloth, got out, and a remote subterranean smash of crockery intimated that he and his tureen had gone down stairs as rapidly as gravitation could draw them to the bottom.

"That fellow will break his way to distinction," said Colt, kicking the door and shutting out the sounds of pain and expostulation.

. CHAPTER IX.

ADJUSTING THE THREADS.

FINN O'BRIEN soon discovered that with a young squire on his hands, with the study of classical literature to pursue, and with a rising in the West to assist in organising, he had enough to do. To overtake it all, that is, to read fifty lines of Virgil and fifty lines of Lucian each day, to teach the little squire of Tasmania the multiplication table and the significance of polysyllables for a couple of hours, and to receive letters from the districts which took their orders from Lodge XII., was as much as he could perform. For Finn's nature was rather impatient. Reading fifty lines of Virgil meant for him turning up a dictionary a hundred and fifty times to find the meanings; reading fifty lines of Lucian was worse—so he early made up his mind to take Lucian and Xenophon and Homer on trust.

Professor Dacy had a great deal to say about Lucian being the Dean Swift of Greece. Well, he might be. But Finn found Dean Swift, especially his "Tale of a Tub," his "Drapier's Letters," and his shorthand compendium with Stella, the hardest reading which he had tried. There was an iciness about it all that he did not like. He preferred writers who "laid on," as he called it; men who worked slowly to a climax, and ended their subject with a page of coruscations like the explosion of a thousand squibs on a dark night. There was no genial warming of the soul in the Dean's level unadorned prose; and Father John agreed with him, as he also agreed when he criticised Goldsmith as "a poor half-witted creature, who would have been much better occupied in driving pigs to Athlone than in composing English books which people meanly and falsely declared to be representative of Irish life and character."

All that was true enough, said Father John, and in the warmth of his catholicism and his patriotism he even went the length of remarking that Irish literature had yet to be written; the men who had proceeded from

Ireland to England to compile and to compose were mostly alien, with alien names, absentees who took their talents to a Saxon market and sold them for what they would bring.

Goldsmith, Swift, Sterne—what was Irish about them? Nothing. Nothing—not even their names. The Irish race would not begin to speak out till it was free, said Father John, and then there would be a dawn, with singing birds on every tree. In the meantime there was nothing for it but the nourishment of undying hate to the race which had forged the fetters for the Celtic people, and if there were a literature let it be one of constant protest, assuming as much as possible the form of addresses to the patriotic feelings of the people, panegyric of the ancient Catholic Church and lamentation for lost heritage.

Such teaching was not lost upon Finn, and though Father Hugh, writing to him for his mother, from Ballybunion, counselled him to keep in the path cut out for him by the profession of law, he was in the meantime beginning to feel a little uneasy about his choice.

It might be very well to be Lord Chancellor ;

but what if he halted on the way and became a small land-agent rack-renting the Irish people? At Loop Head, where for some reason or other rents had not been collected for five-and-twenty years—Ballybunion was the property of an eccentric Irish gentleman living in London who bought it for the very purpose of foregoing rent—he had never heard lawyers spoken of with disrespect. In Loughan, the opinion of them was bitter in the extreme. They associated the idea of law with a fat Scotchman with a black beard and whiskers, who administered the estate on which Loughan was situated, and who, accompanied by a sub-inspector and half-a-dozen armed policemen, from time to time ejected a moneyless family and pulled off the roof from a cottage. Finn had heard of him, and judged once for all that the Scottish people were the undying enemies of Ireland, and that this particular Scotchman would be “neen the waur,” as he was himself in the habit of saying, for a “posting.”

That such work should be done in the name of the law, and that it was possible that he should be called upon to undertake it, made him hesitate whether he should go on with his

preparatory studies. But there was more than one reason why he held on, and refrained from retiring to Ballybunion to put his hand once more on the plough. He was beginning to experience the pleasures of power. Power came to him in many ways.

"I have letters for you here," Father John had told him soon after his appointment to the secretaryship. "They are under cover to me. I ask no questions, Finn O'Brien; I trust to your honour as an Irish gentleman that these letters contain nothing which would compromise me as a Christian and a priest."

"Nothing whatever," said Finn, reading a cipher from Inishmore, which told of the formation of three brotherhoods in the island, which had begun operations upon some Protestant cattle. "Not at all, not at all," said Finn, just glancing at the announcement of a successful assassination at Boffin. "There's nothing here you mightn't read if you chose, Father John," continued Finn, taking out a post-office order for five pounds from Letterfrack, collected for the good of Lodge No. XII., and with the hope and belief that they would trust in Ireland and keep their powder

dry. To No XII. the West looked for its deliverance. By highway or byway, by field, moss, or mountain. So help them God; God save Ireland.

Such communications gave the lad a feeling of far-reaching influence. As yet he had not made up his mind what his secretaryship was to lead him to. He had no distinct vision of what the secret societies could do for Ireland, yet he enjoyed the idea that they could do much; so much that, some day, there should be a gigantic meeting of Celts, with banners flying, with bayonets glancing, who should take the field, when the work of the secret societies was over, and dashing upon Dublin should hold it; upon Belfast should hoist the green flag; upon Cork should make Shandon ring for the shamrock; upon Limerick should blow up its tyrannous keep and make the dear Shannon Irish for ever.

Vaguely Finn looked into the future and saw these things; in the meantime, however, there was everything in the position of responsibility to satisfy his feeling for power. For one thing he was conscious of much good-will being bestowed upon him in and around

Loughan, and occasionally even in the streets of Galport.

“Will ye step across the door and take something, Master O’Brien?” was a very common invitation given him at doors, where he did not know the faces, but where the faces knew him. He found that, turn where he might, literally on highway or byway, field, moss, or mountain, men who approached him recognised the passwords and signals of No. XII., and being assured that he knew them, would speak briskly and joyfully of the future of Ireland.

Great as the influence of No. XII was, however, it worked in the dark like other lodges of the West. It was the agency of an agency. Who the men were who were to induct the country to freedom, it did not know. How it was to be done it did not know. What the plans of the campaign were to be it had not definitely heard. Yet there was something in the mystery in the background which gave confidence. The Mystery worked from Dublin and was backed by New York: there was infinite resource and capacity for fight in the idea. In the fulness of time, no doubt,

the Mystery would declare itself, and all Ireland would waken up to action and suddenly find freedom, plenty, and happiness.

In the meantime the development of local plots was interesting and amusing. And I fancy those who regard secret societies in Ireland as the direct and immediate outcome of tyranny and suffering forget how much of their success is due to the remoteness of the conspirators from the ordinary sources of human happiness.

Life in a wigwam, or in many wigwams together, is apt to become monotonous. On any given day there is no reason why the men should move from their beds till the forenoon is well over. Why should they? They lie late, therefore, and as often as not sit round a handful of peat all day with a filthy pack of cards, catching the ten from morn till dewy eve. The secret society comes among them as a God-send. It stimulates them to acts of furtive brotherhood. It substitutes hope for despair. It makes the weak man as strong as his neighbour, and promises him in time a reward which will be his by discharging pistols from mud-banks and osier gates, instead of by

day in day out, toiling and grubbing till his fields have become productive, and he has a stocking in the rafter. It supplies a constant topic for heated talk, and it separates mankind into the useful division of friends and enemies. Then it lifts acts of private vengeance and petty malice into the convenient altitude of patriotism, bravery, and love of country. And it connects the remote with the known, the furthest islander of Inishmore who belongs to a brotherhood having his pulses stirred by a knowledge that his watchword could pass him from Galport to Dublin, from Dublin to London, from thence to America, and wherever Irishmen congregate.

The Mystery in Dublin—*i.e.* the central lodge, from which the little commercial traveller, with the frieze coat, brought hints for the guidance of Lodge No. XII.—had, however, unfolded a certain amount of its plan of operation. Three courses were to be pursued. In the first place the landed families of the West were to be kept as miserable as anonymous letters could make them. Some of them were, as opportunity might present, to be “removed” in accordance with the terms

of the oath; and persons in a humbler degree of life were to be "removed," who were forced to sympathise or to work in co-operation with them. The individuals who were selected for assassination were chosen according to local taste, and the means of removal, if they could not be discovered on the spot, were to be suggested from Lodge No. XII.; if the case happened to be beyond its power, it was passed back to the Mystery at Dublin, which usually attempted to justify its existence by importing into the West some tried hands, willing to run great risk for small pay. In the second place, a steady traffic was to be conducted with America and the Continent in arms of all classes. Guns, pistols, swords, bayonets, were to be landed on the Connemara shore, and they were to be taken in charge by No. XII. They were to be stored by No. XII. No. XII. was to be responsible for them to the Mystery, and to satisfy the Mystery that they had been safely, judiciously, and effectively scattered amongst the good men and true who belonged to the brotherhood.

In the third place, the brotherhood was to make itself a soldiery, and to this end it was

to drill when and where it could find a chance. "On highway, byway, field, moss, or mountain," where men met, they were to exercise themselves in falling-in, marching, counter-marching, making assaults, defences, and every variety of manœuvre which should teach them to take their stand in the open field, upon the great day of battle which the Mystery meant to issue, when convenient.

Finn O'Brien's head was naturally a little turned, when he realised that in these great doings he was to bear an important part. It was not merely the fashionable attire of the barracks that made him carry his head so high. As he walked about the quadrangle of the college he felt, what none of the others could feel, that he was already embarked in life. The learning of the schools began to look contemptible to him beside the gigantic issue of Ireland's freedom. The change which came over him was noticeable to all. They noted that he bore himself with head erect and chest expanded. He no longer shrunk among the side-aisles, but courted the centre, and gave his opinion with loud confidence. Students ceased to call him "Paddy Shark"; he was

respectfully hailed as O'Brien, and the blue coat, leggings, and brass buttons were only remembered as a genial eccentricity. Nor was his deficiency in scholarship made much of. Rather it was counted as part of that general spirit of rebellious independence which proclaimed him to be a fellow of the right sort. The fact that he had paid no fees, too, was not criticised hardly. Plenty of men had paid none, having taken a run to Limerick or Dublin instead, and enjoyed a week of felicity, at a professor's expense, while they blamed the tenantry on their father's estates for not paying their debts.

It was under these circumstances that Finn at last found himself able to found and establish an Annoyance Committee—known as such, however, only to No. XII. and the Mystery.

CHAPTER X.

MRS. LYNCH BECOMES UNEASY.

"MR. O'BRIEN," said Mrs. Lynch, soon after he had begun to teach the little squire for the day, "give Morris a holiday; I want to consult you about something. Come into the dining-room."

Finn's pulses quickened as he followed the widow. What could she consult him about? Whatever it was it was a vote of confidence in him, and when she turned on him with a perturbed face at the window, he was grinning from ear to ear with delight.

"Why, you boy that you are, it is a very serious matter."

"I hope it's not so serious as you think," said Finn, cheerfully summoning up at the moment all the possibilities of disaster which might be likely to overtake Tasmania. In any case, disaster or not, Mrs. Lynch, with a

bunch of blue spring flowers in her bosom, and her azure eyes filled with apprehension, was a subject for cheerful contemplation. She did not seem to be timid, but she was anxious.

"I hope not, but just read that, Mr. O'Brien, and tell me what you think of it."

Finn read, and in some confusion recognised a sheet of denunciation and threats of murder against Mrs. Lynch and Captain Owen. Mrs. Lynch was to take notice that, on and after a certain date, she would be watched, followed, and ultimately hunted down like a beast of the field for her behaviour to the old tenantry of St. Columbkille. Her friendship with Captain Owen was stigmatized as worthy of the scarlet woman, and the bullet, it was announced, was moulded which would lay him low at her threshold.

Finn recognised the missive. The Annoyance Committee had had a first meeting, and it had exercised itself in the composition of threatening letters, some of which Finn had dictated; none of which, for such was the policy of No. XII., did he write or sign.

The dispatch of a threatening letter to Mrs.

Lynch had, however, been a trick played upon him by one of the Committee. There was nothing in it he very well knew; for in No. XII. itself he had been able to convince the Brotherhood that, for the time at least, it was better that no threats should be written to the widow. In the first place he would use his influence to get the tenants at St. Columbkille re-established in their rights; besides, as he hinted, it was an unmanly and an unpopular thing to wage war upon a woman.

“You see that it is very serious,” said the widow. “It is so serious that I’ve had the Resident Magistrate up to look at it. But I would rather run the risk of being knocked down than ask him again. He never comes but he proposes to marry me; it is so tiresome, Mr. O’Brien. Then poor Captain Owen is not much better. I showed him the threats, and he said, ‘There is nothing for it but to lower the flag of Lynch and hoist the flag of Owen. Say the word,’ said the poor Captain, ‘and I shall sacrifice my military future and come up to Tasmania and protect you for ever.’ And I don’t know how many elderly gentlemen of the County Club are lying in

wait to repeat the same thing. I am sure never was woman so persecuted."

"It's the penalty of beauty," said Finn, fervently.

"You, too, Mr. O'Brien! I am not even protected from my child's tutor. I tell you I hate compliment, and I will not allow it. Mr. O'Brien, advise me what I shall do. Here I am fixed down by the will of my husband—and a very hard and exacting thing of the Major it was to do—to Ireland for six months of each year till my son comes of age. And I am told by the secret societies that I shall be murdered; and I am asked by every single old gentleman in the neighbourhood if I don't want an eligible husband to protect me against them. Morris, you are not wanted here just now. Yes, you may go to the gamekeeper's if you like."

Such vivacity! Such artless charm! Such bravery amidst danger!

Finn was beside himself with admiration and affection. And he looked it. He looked it so openly that Mrs. Lynch, scanning him from toe to poll, and relapsing into merriment, observed,—

"Mr. O'Brien, you are not worth this bunch of violets as an adviser." She adjusted them anew on her bosom, and dropped one.

"May I?" said Finn, searching for it in an elephantine manner on the floor, finding it, and placing it in the leaves of a note-book.

"You may, you foolish fellow; and add these to them," said the widow, handing O'Brien the whole bunch. "But you are as bad as the oldest of them. I should be very glad to have done with it all and get back to dear London again. Tell me, then, you think I have nothing to fear from this thing?"—and she made a taper of the sheet of threats.

"I would treat it with the contempt it deserves. It is the emanation of a mean mind."

"Well, that may be; but do you think the mind mean enough to shoot me if its body had the chance?"

"I am quite sure it has no intention of shooting you. You are as safe as the Queen of England."

"I would rather be as safe as some much more obscure person," said Mrs. Lynch, looking out at the lawn and the lake, which at that

moment was as blue as her own eyes, the sky overhead being untouched with a cloud.

“There, there is dear Morris with that dreadful carbine. He will certainly kill himself. Please to catch him and unload it.”

Finn was let out upon the lawn from the window, and set off in pursuit of the boy towards the lake, while a horseman soberly clad in black rode up. He paused before the window where the widow was straining her eyes eagerly in the direction of the young squire.

“Richard, you have brought the horse up as if he were shod on velvet,” she said, seeing with satisfaction the carbine taken from her boy.

“Who is our new friend, Beatrice? Is it my double? He looks very like me in the distance. How he seems to love the squire to be sure! Beatrice, that boy grows more and more like the Major every day. He is a work of art, Beatrice. I never knew a mother who had better reason to be proud of her progeny. Look how the swans swim away from him! Take note of the cowed behaviour of my double, whoever he is, when the squire asks him for the gun.”

“Enough, Richard, enough; you are pretending to care for the boy. I know you care as little for him as you do for his mother.”

Richard Owen came down from his horse, and giving him in charge to a groom, stepped inside the drawing-room and closed the window. Mrs. Lynch liked the Captain; he was ten years younger than the husband she had lost two years ago at Madeira, on his way out to the Governorship of Tasmania; yet he was not young, for he was forty-three; but he had a stalwart, protecting style about him, and dark, finished, Grecian features, which were, so far, irresistible.

“Why do you never bring Captain Jeffery with you? What I saw of him at the Christmas festival made me want very much to see more of him. He is quite the handsomest officer in the —th.”

“Oh, he’s very well up to a certain point; but deuced full of conceit. Besides, he is in love, and you can’t get sensible talk out of him.”

“And I suppose I can have it from you.”

“As much of it, dear Beatrice, as you like. Have you recovered your fright about the

secret societies? I called on the R. M. They are to give you a couple of policemen. But old Butler looked at me as if he thought I had myself sent the infernal message. I am told, however, that there have not been so many threatening letters received for a generation as during these last few weeks. There's something in the wind, they say. But then we all know what that means. There has always been something in the wind in Ireland, and nothing ever came of it."

"Well, it doesn't hinder me from being a little nervous," said the widow, "and from being rather thankful at this moment that my son, as you see, has his hand in the hand of a true, faithful Irishman, and that I am standing at the window supported—but not literally, if you please—by one of the strongest men in the barracks. When do the policemen mount guard?"

"Some day soon; but I can give you a couple of men in red till they are put on if you are really frightened."

"I am not the least nervous about myself. It's about Morris, poor child, who is always running hither and thither; and after some of

the dreadful things they have done, I don't feel at all sure of his safety."

"Seriously, then, Beatrice, why not make yourself sure?"

"Please, please, Richard, do not look so exactly like the R. M. and half-a-dozen others, whom I am obliged to snub when they lead the conversation round to a proposal. Shall I play something to amuse you?"

"No," said the Captain, looking gloomily out on the lawn.

"That's a much better style than the sentimental and imploring. I can't think how a man of your sense and your years——"

"Come, I say, Beatrice, I am at least as young as the fellow who is shepherding the squire—I believe he is temporarily the favourite. You are as fickle as the west wind."

"Which I suppose is like one of your reds; it bloweth where it listeth."

"Beatrice!"

"Don't call me by my name so often, if you please. I once allowed you to do it, because it slipped out, you said, by mistake. And I have adopted Richard, so that your heart might not

be quite broken. But I should like you to remember that I am *Mrs. Lynch*, and that you are *Captain Owen*."

"This is dreary work," said the Captain, sorrowfully; "I had hoped for a better reception. No, thank you, I shall take nothing. I shall go round and get my horse. I have to leave a card further west—the wiseacres are beginning to tell of a general rising in the West, and I must discuss the subject with a fogey who thinks he knows. Good-bye. I shall go and say how d'ye do to the squire."

"And kindly say nothing insulting to the beautiful Irish gentleman who is with him. He is highly sensitive."

"Damn his sensitivity! They are all sensitive," said the Captain, letting himself out, while the widow sat down at her piano and thundered defiance as he retreated.

Finn and his charge were standing at the verge of the lake when the Captain sauntered over to them. Morris was listening to a legend of Brian Boru, who, he was told, was one of the progenitors of the Lynch family.

It was an exciting story, invoking the re-

peated slaughter of hostile Saxons, and still the boy called out for more blood.

"Oh, come away," he said, foreseeing that Captain Owen would break up the narrative.

"We don't want you," he repeated, as the disappointed soldier put out his hand to shake his.

Then Owen saw Finn, that he was young, that he was handsomely made, and that he wore a suit of clothes which had unmistakably hung in his wardrobe not long ago.

"How do you happen to go about in other men's clothes?" asked the Captain.

Finn squared his shoulders, but felt a cold perspiration break out over him: He attempted to ignore the Captain by proceeding with his story as if no one were by but the boy and himself. The boy put his hand on his arm and led him away with a "Never mind that nasty black Saxon."

"Look here, young gentleman; that suit of clothes disappeared rather mysteriously from the barracks. You've got to explain how you happen to be wearing them. Come, Morris, you stick by me till the fellow tells me all about it."

"And Brian Boru," proceeded Finn, greatly to the boy's satisfaction, "he stood in the mouth of his tent, and just as the Danes were in the middle of the stream, he put his two fingers to his mouth and gave a whistle like this——"

"Come, Paddy," said the Captain, with his hand on Finn's shoulder.

"Is it the suit?" asked Finn. "I bought them at Mr. Colson's emporium."

"Three balls?" asked the Captain, shrugging his shoulders. "Very good. I have nothing to say to that," and he turned on his heel.

"I would like to kill him with one ball," said Finn aloud, as he saw the Captain disappear to the stables. But he finished his story to the boy.

Three-quarters of an hour later a gardener found the Captain's horse quietly grazing beside a gate inside the grounds. The Captain, with a ball in his heart, was lying face downwards among a thicket of nettles.

CHAPTER XI.

A POT SHOT.

THE "removal" of Captain Owen was accepted in the West as a tribute to the fearlessness and skill of No. XII. Numerous offerings in gold and silver were made during the next few days from secret admirers, and Finn O'Brien found himself more than ever a hero among the people of Loughan and the neighbourhood. It was in vain that he disclaimed all connection with the murder of Captain Owen to "boys" who had the password, and who congratulated him on the grand shot he had made. He was merely winked at, slapped on the back, and more than once lifted from the ground and carried "shoulder-high" amid cheers. Even Father John suspected him for a short time; but when an inquest had been held, and Finn examined and discharged, he accepted his innocence as an

established fact. In fact, there had never been any suspicion of his guilt in official quarters; he was merely asked at the inquest to tell what he knew of Captain Owen's movements before the murder. The servants at Tasmania had testified that he was in the drawing-room with Mrs. Lynch at the time the murder must have been committed.

The whole affair was therefore wrapped in mystery; at least to the world outside Tasmania.

When they were playing the Captain's dead body, to the tune of "Saul," to the cemetery, however, Mrs. Lynch, with her blinds down, had the appalling knowledge that the man she had almost loved had been slain by her own child. It was not till far on in the night that the deed was committed, that she did know. Her boy slept in a little crib in the dressing-room off her own bedroom, and at midnight, as the moon made a pathway of light from her window to his door, the little fellow crept out, and she saw him, as in a dream, walk through the light to her bedside.

"Morris," said the widow, who was lying in her ponderous bed with monumental still-

ness, the breathing of her chest being hardly visible to the boy among the white linen in which she was wrapped; "Morris dear, why are you awake?" she asked, leaning over to him. "Are you not well?"

And at that moment the pathway of rays shifted, and the great bedstead was flooded with them, the mother with her proud head leaning affectionately over her child, a shower of auburn hair falling upon her shoulders.

"Mother," said the boy, clinging to her neck with both his hands, "were you thinking of Captain Owen?"

"Why, dear?" said the mother, lifting him lightly into bed beside her; "are you lying awake thinking of him?"

"I fell asleep at first, but I woke, and I can't sleep no more till I tell you it was me shot him."

"Morris!" said the mother, with a gasp, standing him on the floor again, "you mustn't trifle with me. Go back to your crib, and I shall come and cover you up. You are dreaming, dear." Yet she shivered from head to foot, and, without believing the child, a great terror arrested the beating of her heart,

as she saw the little upright vision in white, with its yellow hair lying on its bare neck, disappear again in the moonlight.

She sat up and rubbed her eyes. No, she was not asleep. She had not been asleep. It was her own child who had just come to her and told her he was the murderer of the poor gentleman. But how could it be? Morris was but an infant; born but the other day as it seemed; and incapable of bloodshed. Just then she perceived the child begin to climb into the bedstead from the opposite side.

Mrs. Lynch gave a piercing cry, which sounded through the bedroom, and brought her maid in terror to the door.

"It is nothing," said the widow peremptorily, and the maid retired, struck, however, with the fact that little Morris was scrambling about the bed talking unintelligibly about Captain Owen.

"Morris," resumed his mother, after the door was shut upon the maid, "you must never say that frightful thing again."

"But it's true. It was me shot him, and I heard Edwards say to the gamekeeper, 'A good job for the squire that that fellow's hash

has been settled. Another ten months of him and, nilly willy, he'd have been master here.' It's a good job I shot him. It didn't hurt him. He saw me beginning to fire, and he said, 'Keep that damned thing with the muzzle to the ground;' and I fired, and his horse jumped and he dropped like a stone, and I ran away and put the carbine in the left-hand corner of the gun-room."

Mrs. Lynch rose and went to the gun-room; the fatal carbine was there, sure enough, with a crushed copper cap in the trigger, and the barrel black with recent use.

The smell of the charge was still in the muzzle; she nearly fainted as she involuntarily leant her cheek against it. But she checked herself, carefully removed the cap, cleaned the muzzle till it was bright, recapped and loaded it, and found, from the coldness of her naked feet, that she had been about three-quarters of an hour at her task.

Carefully removing all traces of her visit to the room, she went back to her bed.

There was still a flood of light upon the coverlid, and the little Morris had crept into her place. The widow bent over him, and

looked eagerly into his face. He was placidly breathing, with a sweet reposeful smile. As she looked, the white light passed away from the window and the room, and the mother was left in darkness with her child.

A horrible sensation of dread came upon her; she had to put out her hand and touch his soft cheek to overcome the feeling that she was prisoned with a murderer. She sat in the dark, a chill gathering in her limbs, varying her position from time to time only to feel the heavings in the chest of her sleeping son. Nothing had occurred in her life before to arrest her, as the incident of that night was doing. Why, what had she done, she asked herself, that her child, her boy, hardly finished prattling at her knee, should suddenly become a tiger on her hands, a tiger in the guise of an angel of weakness and prettiness and innocence? Then leaning over him, she shed tears of bitterness upon him, which Morris resented, at first with a slight unawakened moan, then with an angry kick and exclamation of "Damn."

"Boy, boy," cried the mother, beside

herself with grief. "What is this thing you have done?"

"Oh, mother, I'll get up and go to my own bed, I will; you have made me quite damp crying over me that way, so you have."

And the child flung himself out of bed and disappeared to his crib.

But the mother could not rest; she by-and-by lit a lamp and followed him, leaned shudderingly over him with the light, and in one little pucker of his mouth and frown of his brow she read indications of latent savagery which frightened her.

This child who had begun so early, what might he not yet do to cover himself with disgrace? And so unconscious of his crime! Again the widow sat down by him to cry, and again the child wakened with a kick and an oath.

"Dear Morris," said his mother, shivering with terror and cold, "before you go to sleep promise me that you never, never will say to any one what you have said to me about poor Captain Owen. Promise me, darling." Morris sat up with his knuckles in his eyes and looked peevishly at his mother.

"I'm sure it don't matter after what Edwards said to the gamekeeper."

"Boy, my darling boy," said the widow, gathering him to her bosom, "do you know what death is?"

"Yes, you have nearly squeezed me to death now. Don't do it, mother. It makes me cross."

"Death, darling, is what has come to Captain Owen. He will never see, nor hear, nor speak again."

"How could he see or hear again when I put a hole in his stomach? Of course he can't; he's as dead's a nail, and I'm squire here. I want to sleep, mother. I wouldn't have told you if I'd thought you'd bothered so about it."

"Morris, do you know what they will do to you if they find out that you have killed Captain Owen?"

"Laugh! When the grooms heard old Mr. De Burgh was shot where he was watering his geraniums, they laughed like to split. I saw them. They said he could take that for a pill, the ould humbug."

"Morris, if they find out that you have killed Captain Owen, they will take you away

from your mother, put you into a dark dungeon, give you nothing to eat, and one morning they would come for you and—and—oh!—oh!—oh!” Again the widow burst into tears, and again the boy exclaimed, “Damn.”

“You mean they would hang me, I suppose? I know a thing or two better than that. I won’t brag. Here’s my fist on it. Now, go to sleep yourself, mother.”

And the boy turned over and began breathing hard in imitation of a slumber which, soon overtook him.

It was a great crisis in the life of Mrs. Lynch. She saw for the first time that the habitual freedom to roam about with grooms and gamekeepers had lost for her the boy’s real nature, which she persuaded herself was one of kindness, though it might be dashed with the spirit of adventure which she and his father both possessed.

For the first time in her experience of motherhood it occurred to her that she owed duties to the son she had neglected. But what they were, and how they were to be discharged, she could not clearly see. She would

call on the Bishop, she thought, and tell him all. He would be able to direct her in the right way. And with that resolve she fell asleep.

She sat, however, for several days before the funeral of Captain Owen took place, behind her blinds, alternately catching her boy to her heart, greatly to his discomfort, alternately playing minor tunes at her piano to relieve her overcharged feelings. And when the Bishop was ushered in to her one forenoon, she was just conducting the "Dead March" to its last notes, while Morris was devising means to hoist a blind and let in light without his mother knowing.

The Bishop was a small, podgy gentleman, with a soft, tallowy hand and a tenor voice which intoned his conversation, so that it all had a flavour of sanctity. He came, not knowing whether Mrs. Lynch had been engaged to the deceased Captain, or to what extent her grief might only be attributable to the shock of the dead body being found on her grounds.

"How do you do?" intoned the Bishop tearfully, looking from mother to son, and greatly to the latter's delight, pulling up a

blind. "You are too dark, dear Mrs. Lynch; and this is your little boy? What a noble *little boy*! He resembles the late Major more than he resembles you. Come to me, little boy."

"I'm damned if I do," said Morris, who was tying half-a-dozen cushion tassels into one complicated knot.

The Bishop started, and said again, "Come to me, little boy," misbelieving his own ears in the case of the oath.

"He is quite rude and untrained," said the widow, herself inclined to smile at the dusky horror which overspread the good man's face.

"If you speak of me in that way," said Morris, a tassel between his teeth, "I'll tell him what I done, see if I don't. I can shoot with a gun, I can."

The widow, faint at heart but resolute, rose and gathered her boy up from the floor and handed him at the door to the butler, through whose arms he roared till he was out of ear-shot, "I can shoot! I can shoot! I can shoot!"

"Great vivacity in the child," said the Bishop affectionately, and gratefully, too, for

he detested children, and was delighted to see the door shut upon this bad boy.

The Bishop had been sent for by Mrs. Lynch; he paused, therefore, anticipating some revelation, or at least some expression of misery, which might give him a clue to the sort of things he should say.

Mrs. Lynch had risen, and was now standing at the window. For three mortal days she had not looked upon the light; she was grateful for it now; and with her eyes roaming over the park, the lake, and the horizon, the Bishop thought what he had often thought before—that this girl was made to be a help-mate for man.

It was really a solemn moment for the widow; she wished to be discreet and serious and earnest even to tearfulness; there was so much youth in her blood that it would not come, however, just at first.

“I see you are well protected now,” said the Bishop, starting in a secular vein. “I observed both red-coats and blue-coats about the policies. I am sure I don’t know what poor Ireland is to come to; it makes it very miserable work living in it. I have seen

nobody of any consequence during the last few days who has not received notice to quit. I myself had a decree of ejectment written in nervous English served me, in which I was myself pictorially represented as hanged, drawn, and quartered! The threatening letters, the R. M. says, are of a totally different order from those which used to prevail. They are all more or less diabolical works of art. I would gladly give my diocese for a vicarage in the south of England, if I could find anybody willing to make the exchange."

The Bishop touched a chord with which Mrs. Lynch sympathized.

"And don't you think it very hard that I should be compelled by my husband's will to live at least six months of every year in this dreadful country?"

"Under some circumstances it might not be so unpleasant," said the Bishop in an oleaginous voice, which made the widow uneasy. For he reminded her of the R. M. and one or two others. Was it possible that her clergyman, too, must relapse into a worldly tenderness?

She checked him by a rapid outpouring of

part of her sorrow. She did not tell him that her boy had shot the dead Captain. But she told him that she had herself neglected the training of the child, that for seven years he had been taught nothing, that she had allowed him to go among the stables and the conservatories, and hear the talk of the grooms and gardeners, and that she feared some dreadful thing might happen to him if he were not put in a better way of life. How was it to be done? Would the Bishop advise her?

The Bishop thought a little, and repeated his remark about the boy's vivacity, and said that at seven a child ought to know nothing, or if he did know anything, that he ought to know it in such a way as to have to unlearn it afterwards. What was life but a continuous correcting of blunders from the cradle to the grave?

"But, oh!" said Mrs. Lynch, "he might make one gigantic blunder at the outset by which he might become a felon for life."

"As for example," said the Bishop, leaning his head of black, lecky hair on one side, "he might——"

"Oh! he might commit murder," said the mother, now thoroughly in earnest.

The Bishop put his podgy hand upon his round stomach, and emitted a little cachinnation which gurgled off into a cough.

“And the skies might fall and there would be larks,” said the Bishop, applying his snowy handkerchief to his nose, and blowing till the room re-echoed in every corner.

“Give the child a good tutor, and let him have the advantage of your own training in the Scriptures and in the conduct of life. Keep him from the Roman Catholic influence of servants, and the boy will grow up without a serious fault to give you anxiety. A murderer! You have been studying the story of Cain and Abel, and taken it too much to heart.”

The Bishop's voice in its sustained tenor rather soothed the widow. She began to smile. He was one of the elderly unmarried gentlemen to whom her smile was a source of pleasant recollection hours after it had been shed upon him.

“I had not thought of it before,” said the Bishop; “but, Beatrice Lynch, I could show you a way out of your difficulty. Let *me* train your boy. I will take pains to show him the

way in which he ought to go. I will rear him with my own hand. He shall go into the Church if he prefers it, and shall lead a noble, a self-sacrificing life for the fallen sons of men. Beatrice, I had not thought of it before, but if you united your ardent, your young, your enthusiastic life to my life of duty and of comparative self-sacrifice, I think much might remain for us that was worth living for. Beatrice, I am asking you to be my wife!"

"Oh, never, never!" cried Mrs. Lynch, putting her hand to her brow, and revealing, as she did so, the roundest and whitest arm which the Bishop had even seen.

"Will none of them let me alone?" And she rose and left the room.

The Bishop waited till the shadows had gathered on the lawn, waited till his watch told him he had been an hour and a half at the window expecting the widow to return with her answer. When Morris put his head in and observed, that "he could shoot, he could shoot, he could shoot," he thought it was time to arise and get into his carriage.

CHAPTER XII.

AT THE CLADDAGH.

EILEEN CONRAN'S father had been at sea for four nights, and the fourth evening, to her great dismay, a storm began to rage outside their window. Every variation in the behaviour of the sea was made audible at Eileen's casement.

The house, one story high, was built out of a rock at the edge of the wall of the Nunnery, and between the rock and the village flowed a little stream edged with a reef as it joined the sea, over which the tide surged whenever the wind rose. To reach the stream from the sea in the darkness was a feat of dexterity which no man of the Claddagh but her father could perform. For him the reefs had no danger: the louder the waves beat over them the clearer, he said, was the white of the foam, between which he knew to steer to his own

roof-tree. Yet Eileen was anxious as she lit her candles and set them in the window and put a looking-glass behind them.

The waves were rolling into the creek, and the rock and house were covered with spray; beyond the churning she could see the red artillery of lightning flashing above the waves. There were neither moon nor stars to point the bearings; such a night she had often seen before, but not without anxiety for her father. Her hope was that he had run into some of the inlets of Clare or Connemara, and that, while she was trimming the lights for his hooker, he was quietly asleep somewhere, awaiting the subsidence of the storm.

There was to be a meeting that night she knew; but it would keep for another time, if only her father looked after his own safety. However, in case of events happening over which she had no control, she made the room towards the Nunnery as comfortable as possible, and prepared to hand it over to the Brotherhood when it should arrive.

It was no surprise to her, therefore, when the door opened and a voice tentatively remarked,—

“By highway or byway?”

“By field, moss, or mountain,” exclaimed Eileen from her inner room; “and shut the door behind ye, Brother, for my father’s on the sea this night, and another gust of wind will extinguish the candles in my window.”

When she came out of the inner room, however, she was evidently surprised to see what sort of a Brother had come in. She had expected a man in a sou’-wester, with a loud voice, smelling of whiskey; here was a young gentleman, dressed as the young officer was dressed who had once called to arrange about a fish-supply, and to see if he could get a kiss from her—which he didn’t. A Brother! He looked as unlike any of the brave fellows who had sailed with her father as he could be.

“You have the run of the house,” said Eileen, testing him with two silent signs. “But, oh! it’s me wishes that Michael Conran was ashore out of that storm, and it is. He has been away now four days and three nights. It’s me that is frightened he will never see his country liberated if that wind doesn’t go down.”

It was Finn O’Brien who had come in, and

his love for Mrs. Lynch having predisposed him to affection for all sentient existence, he took Eileen to his heart, metaphorically, as soon as he looked on her. She was very anxious, a very sorrowful-looking girl, as she had a good right to be, with her father's hooker out on such water; but how the sorrow became her!

"I think," said Finn, "Eileen Conran, you need never fear about the king. He knows the bay of Galport; every hole and corner of it."

"Ay, and every hole and corner from Tralee to Moville," interpolated the daughter.

"Well, well, then, why should ye be so anxious? Depend you upon it that he's as safe as you and I are now, though, maybe, not with the same red turf on the fire and hot potatoes in the pot and fresh herrings in the tureen. But take my word for it he's safe."

"I would be fain to think it," said Eileen, returning to wipe her looking-glass, and to make sure that the light was shining on the waves.

"It's the salt of the sea that has frosted the panes. But, glory be to God, Brother. Do you hear the nuns at their Vespers?"

There was a lull in the artillery of the sea, and Finn, listening, heard the rich, flexible voices of the sisterhood chanting beyond the Nunnery walls. He took off his hat for the first time, and Eileen replaced her looking-glass, as the howling of the wind recommenced and carried away the soothing sounds in another direction.

Eileen completed the tacit signs of the secret society, Finn correctly responded to them all, and they passed back into the outer room so that they might hear their own voices.

"That one," said Eileen, alluding to the sign of nipping her ears in turn with the thumb and forefinger of her left hand, "is only known to father and such as he trusts. I'm free with you now. Is anything going to happen?"

"You know yourself, Eileen, that if the hooker comes ashore to-night, the cargo is a precious one for the west of Ireland. It's the first consignment of the Manhattan guns, all warranted to kill. You were to show me the store to-night. I'll be with you till he arrives."

"Well, then, it's no hurry that there is,

Master O'Brien," said Eileen, fully aware of her visitor's identity. "But, though, there might be a meeting o' the Lodge. I can't entertain you—sorry the day am I—like your aunt. We're poor fisher people here, Mr. O'Brien. We haven't the great establishment there is at Loughan. No, it's scanty hard fare—except at times," and she looked knowingly from Finn to the floor, and tapped it with her little foot.

"I have an inkling," said Finn, divided between admiration of the foot and curiosity as to the exact meaning of its behaviour.

"When the day comes," said Eileen, drawing a rushlight wick with a hairpin over the mouth of an oil-lamp which hung at the side of the fire, "When *the* day comes, it's me that'll be the proud girl to stand handin' out the arms to the boys—and the powder and the shot, Master O'Brien. Weary, weary, but it's slow to come. Surely that was the feet of the military, eh? Did ye not hear it?"

"No, I heard nothing."

"What are ~~they~~ they here for? They have no information, Master O'Brien. Is anything the matter? Do they suspect? Are ~~they~~ they watchin'?"

Are we betrayed? It was the military. My ears heard their tramp, trampin' down the road and over the bridge. I never knew them come to the Claddagh before. Oh! Master O'Brien, stir yourself and see."

Finn put on his hat, and in the intervals of the whistling of the wind peered into the darkness, went out and shut the door behind him, crossed the bridge and looked down the street of the village, where there was nothing but windy blackness.

He returned to Eileen with his teeth chattering. "Military! No. They wouldn't want to run away with the Nunnery, would they? And I know that your father nor his house is not suspected by the police of act or part in the liberation of Ireland. Show me the stores, Eileen."

The girl was hardly reassured by the investigation, and she went to the inner room, snuffed the light, and wiped the glasses.

"You've never been down before. You'll have a good deal to see. Will you take your supper first, or when you come up?"

"I think I'll wait till I've gone over the stores. Your father has told me so much

about them, and they are, as it were, our base of operation in the West, and it's important for me, the secretary, to see and know. I'll not be long, and perhaps you'll come with me."

"It's there," said Eileen, drawing away a litter of nets and opening a hatchway off her own room; "and you'll go down gently, and keep the light blind off the parcels, and I'll shut you down. You know the sign for going down and coming up."

And Finn disappeared into the rock upon which the hut was built.

Eileen again trimmed her lights, shut the door and approached the fire, upon one half of which she heaped new turf, leaving a red, glowing corner that she might cook at it.

The supper was not difficult to prepare. Eileen took a broad frying-pan from a cupboard, put a mass of fresh butter into it, and as soon as it began to frizzle, inserted half-a-dozen fresh herrings, one after the other. Presently the room was filled with the savour of them, and Eileen thought laughingly of the supper with the Brother as she looked

out a snowy tablecloth and set down forks and plates and placed a pair of decanters on the table. She was stooping at the blazing turf to turn her herrings, when the door opened, and a gust of wind blew out the lamps on the table and the wick at the fireside.

"Come, I say, that's too much of a good thing," said a cheery, cordial voice, accompanied by the metallic ring of a sword on the floor. Eileen recognised the voice of her friend of the barracks.

"In God's name, Colonel Blarney-stone, sir, what brings you here?" asked the girl, erect on the hearth, with a toasting-fork in her hand.

"You," said the soldier, sitting down abruptly in a rush-bottomed chair.

"I would relight your lights for you if I knew how. Thanks, Eileen. It's very snug in here. Your father's at sea—yes, I know he is—they told me that at the other end of the village—he's at sea, and a Government gunboat has been lying at anchor threatening to come ashore for the last eight hours. I am a salvage party in case of wreck; but it's not going to come off. The gunboat has slipped

her anchor and run out to sea. My fellows are snoring in a public-house, and I'm here. Devilish glad to be here, too. Herrings smell like Paradise. Potatoes with their jackets on them, mealy potatoes, gaping over the edge of the pot. And the Princess in all this thunder-of-guns cooking.—Eileen, when am I going to—eh?”

“Colonel, please to sit down, and if it's only supper you want you are welcome, but if it's to make love to me you are, I must——”

“No you mustn't,” said Captain Jeffery, removing a cloak and drawing his chair over the uneven floor to the table. “Eileen, you expected me—there's no two doubts about that.”

And, as if he had been expected, the Captain set to with frank selfishness and demolished a couple of herrings and potatoes, without further ado, correcting the haste of his meal by a well-proportioned dram. Eileen stood at the fire-place eyeing him anxiously. She could not see her way through the situation. Any moment the hooker might run into the creek, or Master O'Brien, among the subterranean stores, might make signs.

and here was this agent of Government making himself very much at home, and likely to stay for an embarrassing length of time. Yet she rather liked him, and if Master O'Brien had not been on the scene she would have found his visit not at all disagreeable.

"Don't call me Colonel again, Eileen. Jeffery's my name and captain's my rank. Yes, I'll take another herring, and that tall lout of a potato, grinning flour and pollen upon his comrades, on the furthest side of the pot. What a potato! Pray, Eileen, do you cure these hams yourself? There's a haunch for a pig, and no mistake. If you don't mind, I could negotiate some of that ham."

"Sure, Captain, and it's you what has the eye. We called that pig the Lord Lieutenant in the Claddagh, he had such a swagger with him, and kept all the other pigs in order, and took the nice warm places, when the sun was shining, all to himself."

"Well, I should like a bit of the Lord Lieutenant; and now that I am here I may as well combine business with pleasure, and give you a payment order for the last fortnight's fish."

“Thank ye for that same,” said the girl, putting the order in a drawer, and serving up the ham.

“Right royally feasted, Princess Conran,” said the Captain rising, after another dram, and putting his arm round the girl’s waist. She did not resist it, because she was meditating how she should get him away; to her anxious ear it already seemed that she heard O’Brien clamouring from below, and her father’s voice in the creek.

“Eileen,” said Jeffery, “this is a rough life for you.”

“I like it,” said Eileen, unwinding herself like a serpent from his grasp. “It suits me. Father and I are the head of our people. We serve no man. We are free. Don’t look at me like that, Captain Jeffery. You are a gentleman, and it’s not love you can make to me in earnest.”

“Now, wouldn’t you like to exchange this life on a rock—this hard life, without any pleasure in it—for something easier? Do you suppose that you were meant, with that foot—don’t draw it out of sight—with that royal pose of the head and chest—I knew you could

smile if you liked to try—do you suppose that you are meant to be the number one fish-fag of an Irish hamlet? Eileen, come into town and throw up this sort of thing. I will furnish rooms for you, such as a princess deserves. You shall have a servant to wait on you. You shall wear silk and satin, and whatever you may fancy. By-and-by you shall come to Dublin and even to London. Wherever I shall be, you shall be."

Eileen's face was crimson, and she was standing as erect as if there were not a fluctuation in her figure.

"By God, Eileen Conran," said the Captain, "you were meant for some other life than this."

"By God I was meant," said the girl, crossing herself, "to be my father's daughter, and to live among my people. I don't know what it is you propose, Captain Jeffery. But I've heard you, and I think, if I take your meaning, that it's nothing honourable. Sir, I thought better of you. I knew you were English, and looked on us poor Irish with English eyes. But you were mistaken, sir. And now go from my door, and may nothing ill befall you,

for if I but said the word it's fifty knives that would be, at your heart in the raising of a finger." Jeffery put his hand upon his sword and half drew it.

"That against fifty, Eileen, any day. No, my good girl, if you are more of a princess than I took you to be, there's an end of the matter."

"In the name of purity, Captain Jeffery, I would ask you to go from under my father's roof-tree. I tell you, if it was known in the Claddagh this night that a soldier from the barracks—be he colonel, be he drummer—had used an insulting word to me, it's blood and nothing else what would wipe it out."

"Why, my dear girl," said Jeffery, helping himself to another dram, "you are too serious over it, though I rather like it; it makes you so confoundedly handsome from head to heel——"

"What's that?" she exclaimed, as a subterranean rumble like thunder shook the floor and made the hams swing in the rafters and the turf fall asunder on the hearth.

"A gun," said the Captain. "I believe that muff has got his ship ashore. By, by, Eileen."

CHAPTER XIII.

FINN'S DISCOVERY.

THE report which shook the house came from the stores. It was only Finn O'Brien, who, after his descent from the cupboard of nets, found himself inside a spacious cave, dry, sandy, and piled like an armoury with a great variety of guns, pistols, pikes, swords, and things which glittered and shone, and who having handled a perilous looking instrument of destruction rather rashly, had made an unintentional detonation.

The cave, so far as Finn could make out by the aid of the rather dim lamp he carried, was connected with the sea ; at all events he seemed to be conscious of the hollow rumble of an incoming and withdrawing tide at no great distance from the armoury. He went down towards it until the sandy floor became shingle, began to ascend, and finally presented a wall

of pebbles and boulders to the roof of the cave, except at one point, where a hole large enough to let out a man's body kept up the connection between the silence within and the sound without.

Finn climbed up to it, held his light to his head, and peered. Nothing but inky darkness, the hollow dripping of spring water, and the nearer rumble of the incoming and withdrawing tide.

It seemed to him as if one or more seals had slid into the sea; he would not be sure, but at any rate the storm was felt in that subterranean haunt, for flakes of foam were floating round his lamp; he felt, too, the shock, time after time, as the waves smashed and boomed outside.

Finn returned on his footsteps, and seeing first one bracket and then another and another in a series round the cave, he lit the wax candles which were inserted in them, and presently had the glitter of myriad rock-crystals in his eyes. But he saw, spite of the confusion of the military stores, that the cave was at least as much the result of hammer and chisel as it was due to the hollowing influence

of the waves. For there were seats—like the prebendal stalls of the Cathedral—here and there, wrought from the rocks, with rocky arms and backs and steps. At the furthest angle of the cave there was something like an altar, and above it, carved into the rock, were the names of a score of fratres and patres, who had led a burrowing religious life there at various dates during the course of several centuries. They were all Lynches, O'Flahertys, Joyces, Fitzstephens, and Hares.

Finn sat down in one of the seats, with a heap of piled arms on either side of him, and looked round.

There was a prayer-inspiring feeling in the place, so as he sat gazing upon the crystals and thinking of Eileen at that moment bending over her turf, and Mrs. Lynch at Tasmania, mourning for the shot Captain, he shuddered a little at his loneliness, and murmured, "God save Ireland."

It was at that moment that a gun he had taken down from a collection of them at his elbow went off as he mechanically handled the stock. The shock of the recoil threw him on his back, where he lay for a little, not very

certain that he had not broken his breast-bone. A little later on, Eileen, lamp in hand, found him reading a manuscript volume which had toppled on him with a pile of heavy ledgers.

“Well, really, Master O’Brien, it’s you that should be more careful,” said the girl, seeing that he was unhurt.

“There was a soldier upstairs, and he thought the explosion was a gunboat ashore, or we might all have been found out, and poor Ireland put back again for many, many years. Oh, there’s nothing in these, Master O’Brien. Just some of the boys took it into their heads to carry off the rent-books from some estates; and these are them. But come away upstairs out o’ this. I know not who may come, and nobody but a roastin’ herring to speak for us. Leave things as you found them, Master O’Brien,” she added, as Finn, with a collection of bound deeds under his arm, followed her to the aperture. She returned and blew out the candles, and Finn, still retaining the deeds, said he would need them as secretary, and would she tell him who her mother was, and how her father came to marry her?

“My mother was a nun, Master O’Brien,”

said Eileen, after they had reached the upper room, "just like Sister Maria—she would come and go between the Nunnery and the Claddagh, and Michael Conran was a young man and the bravest fisherman on the beach,—just what he is now, dear father o' mine,—and he took a great fancy to her, and she to him, and one day there was the greatest ado ever was, for Sister Eileen had disappeared. They thought she was drowned in the sea first of all. But the king that was—old King O'Rourke—he missed Michael—my father that is. And he said, at the head o' the pier, 'I wouldn't like to believe it, and His Holiness forgive him for it, but I think young Michael Conran has run away with the nún.' 'What's that you say?' said Father O'Rourke, own brother to him, and at that time priest to the Claddagh. 'Timothy, I believe,' he repeated, 'young Michael has made free with Sister Eileen, and it troubles me to know what to do, for it's a case I can't decide.' 'Michael Conran marry sister Eileen Lynch,' said Father Timothy. 'Marry the Holy Ghost! A sainted, sensible girl like Eileen would never abandon her vows and give herself over to the secular custody

of a young rascalion like Michael Conran.' 'Deed then,' says one of the boys, 'and I think it serves us no good purpose to conceal matters longer; but I was one of a party what landed sister Eileen and Michael on the Clare coast, and saw them married with my own eyes.' Father Timothy stamped up and down the pier like a madman, till half the Claddagh was gathered about him. And he and his brother had very nearly a stand-up fight, for the priest said that it would be a European scandal, and the king said that it need never go across the village into the city of Galport. 'Deed then, why should a fine, plump girl like Sister Eileen be a nun all her life?' he asked. And Father Timothy, he cried, 'Brother O'Rourke, though it's the head of the Claddagh you are, you know no more of the power of the Church than an insect in the neck of a Solan goose.' 'I know, brother Timothy, that you were always a great fool,' he replied, and he said it with an oath, mind you! 'If you say no more about it, I'll say no more, and if the young couple come back let them alone.' But they never came together. Only, a year or two after, Michael, my father, came,

and he had me with him, and he said that he had left his wife—my mother, a nun, a Lynch, and a lady, born to a high position—lying in a grave in Kerry. And the Church never interfered with him, and there was no European scandal, Master O'Brien, and now my father's king. And—and—Oh, the God in heaven be praised, dear father, and it's yourself that has come through all that storm and wind to your own roof-tree again."

The door had opened and the sou'-westered figure of the king stepped up to the fire. "By highway or byway, Master O'Brien," said the fisherman.

"No need at all, at all," said Eileen, "but there's soldiers in the village, and Larry O'Shee's captain was here."

"And what did he want?" demanded the king, stopping half-way with a decanter and a tumbler. "It's not love he's making to you, Eileen?"

"Love, father, don't be stupid now, but just refresh yourself. Did you see my lights? Come in to the fire, Costello; come in, Chard, there's plenty for you all." And half-a-dozen

sou'-westered men slouched from the door to the fire.

"Not a drop," said the king peremptorily, as Eileen proceeded to pour out whiskey for the shivering men, "till the nets are put on the hooker. Away with you boys."

And away the dripping men went to an outhouse, from which, dragging armfuls of nets, they stepped down to the creek, where in the darkness the hooker was visible to their practised eyes, made fast from the bow and the stern by ropes attached to iron rings in the rock.

Two men on board arranged the nets, and their comrades returned to the house.

"The hooker," the king was explaining, "may lie there a month, with the nets in it, and no coastguard man would ever look the way it was on. Half the cargo will be out of her before morning if the centres have been properly informed, Master O'Brien."

"They're well informed," said Finn.

"The other half will be taken to-morrow night; and if my calculation is right, there will be more of the boys armed and supplied on this shore than the Galport barracks could

manage on a fine morning's fight. Now, boys, you may drink before you go home, and you may think yourselves fortunate to be gettin' your nippings here. It was a close shave at the bar. *But the guns are ours anyhow; and you can all sleep over it with a quiet conscience. What's that? "*

The subject of the interrogatory was Captain Jeffery, who had come back through the storm to see Eileen.

"Well, boys, you've done a good stroke of navigation if you came in out of that. How d'ye do, King Conran? Did you happen to notice a gunboat in the Bay? "

"No, your honour," said the king, changing his demeanour from one of command to that of the ordinary peasant of the West. "We could see nothing out there for the water. It's runnin' very high, your honour. Will your honour be so good as take something? "

"Thanks, king, I've had as much as I can get along on. I've only walked down the length of the village to keep myself from falling asleep. I'm off again. Good-night, princess. Good-night, all of you."

“Costello,” said Conran, “let me see that gully of yours.”

Costello handed him a horn handle with a large shining blade. He stooped and drew it thrice across the hearthstone. The whole crew, man after man, stooped and did the same.

“Now, by the look that was in that young blood’s eye, I know that he knows there’s something other than fish in the hooker. There’s no time to lose. Put it well into his back between the shoulder-blades, Dan—four of you. He’s not very sober, I think.” Eileen was taking down her candle and mirror from the window when she became aware of her father’s orders and the men’s intention to obey.

“Shame to you, then, Michael Conran, my own father!” said the girl, sweeping into the room and standing with folded arms in front of the door,—“Shame to you, to take advantage of a stranger and to draw blood from him who has never drawn it against you. Lay by your knives, Costello and Chard, and Donnelly and all of you. Master O’Brien,—you that’s college-bred, and know how to speak,—

will ye stand there like a dumb dog and say nothing? Do you not know what it is they are after? And can you not tell them? Time enough 't is to kill when we have to meet them in battle array. But there will be no victims made at my door. See if there will, then," and Eileen snatched a knife from the nearest fisherman.

"Father, well it is you know me. I declare to ye that if a man steps across that door before he has given me his word on the altar that no blood will be shed this night in the Claddagh, it's stab myself I will before your eyes!" Very determined and suicidal the girl looked as she swept the group with a passionate and angry glance.

"Very good, then, Eileen Conran. And you know better than your father. Take something, Master O'Brien. We'll need you at the hooker to help give out the arms."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WIND OF LANGUAGE.

FINN O'BRIEN had made an important discovery in the bunch of documents he carried away from the stores beneath the king's hut. Through the dry parchments he read substantially the same story as to Nun Lynch that Eileen had told him. He carried them—or part of them—to the priest at Loughan, and he confirmed his own conclusion, that the Nun Lynch who had married Michael Conran was unquestionably the heiress, through an older branch of the Lynch family, to whom the estates at Columbkille, Tasmania, and in the neighbourhood of Lough Head rightly belonged. They had gone to Major Lynch in default of a claimant. And why had there been no claimant? The father was at first inclined to put the whole case in the hands of a lawyer. But on further consideration he

advised Finn that the best thing he could do was to restore the documents to the niche from which they had been taken. No doubt, he said, there had been ecclesiastical sagacity at work in the suppression of the documents up to that time. The Church was interested in the marriage of Nun Lynch, and it might be depended upon that if it had been worth the Church's while it would have seen to the restoration of the estates.

"You will promise me, Finn O'Brien," he said, "that the documents will go back to that cupboard in Michael Conran's house where you say you got them. Michael's house is built upon a rock, and it's within the old bounds of the Nunnery, and he and his goods are in a way the property of the Church. To let daylight in upon Michael's marriage would just revive a foul slander upon the sisterhood, which the Episcopalians would be very grateful for at the present hour. And you tell me that the Widow Lynch, though she is a Protestant, is very amenable to advice about her tenants, and very generous to the poor who approach her. Well, let matters be, Master O'Brien. Perhaps when you are a

great lawyer, and have taken Dan's place in the esteem of the people of Ireland, you will work at the case in such a way that scandal will be avoided to the Church and justice will be done to everybody."

Finn had kept back a document, the meaning of which, with the aid of a Celtic dictionary and a volume of monkish illumination in the College library, he was slowly making out. He had not shown it to Father O'Clery, because he was possessed with the sort of feeling about it that a pointer has when he stands behind a patch of concealing heather where he knows there are some partridges ready to take wing. Finn felt that he was on the verge of making some discovery of immense interest to himself and perhaps to Ireland. He laboured away at the tattered document for weeks, neglecting everything except his secret committee work, until he had made out a translation. Having mastered it, it did not seem to him so important; for, as far as he could make out, it was only an injunction, half in Latin, half in Erse, to the house of Lynch that it should preserve through all time the sacred bell of St. Columb.

There was nothing to indicate when the document had been prepared or whose the hand was who had prepared it; but Finn judged that the bell must be concealed somewhere about the grounds of the ruined priory of Columbkille on the Clare shore. If so, it was in the lease of one of the brotherhood to whom he had given arms out of the hooker at the Claddagh—a great seven-foot farmer, who was able to stow away upon his person four pistols and a gun without visible symptom of alteration. And Columbkille belonged to Mrs. Lynch, who actually knew nothing about the bell, and who, if she had known, would have regarded it with no particular veneration, belonging as she did to the sect, as Finn termed it, of the Protestants.

But Finn had made another discovery, and that was regarding himself. He found that when he stood up in front of any score or two of persons that his ideas arranged themselves in his mind and found expression in a language far more appropriate than that which he used for common conversation. It was a surprise to him just at first; his first debate at the Diagnostic Society on the

subject of "Patriotism" had taught him his own powers. When he had entered the classroom, Finn had no intention of joining in the debate. He only meant to listen to what others had to say. But the account of patriotism he heard was too much for him. It was described by the Englishman who read the essay as a something or other in the human bosom which kept a man on good terms with the "British Constitution." And it was upheld by half-a-dozen Squireens, with switches, as the blood in the head which made an Irishman ever the foremost on the field of battle, ever the most devoted to his Queen, ever the most attached to Ireland and the established laws of the realm. But Finn had no such idea of it, and before he well knew where he was, he was on his feet, his hand beneath his coat-tails and his right arm swinging, whilst he set forth his ideas of patriotism as "a sacred hate," "an undying detestation," "an inborn and everlasting grudge," "the inalienable prerogative of scorn and loathing," "national contempt," and "Celtic ire." Against whom? Against the alien who occupied the land. And why? Because—and

Finn launched into a review of eight centuries, which took him twenty minutes to deliver, making a survey of the recent evictions in the West, with pathetic portraits of men, women, and children flung forth upon the highways and byways—"by field, moss, and mountain," said Finn, drawing to a conclusion, and glancing round upon an audience which he somewhat appalled by the sustained character of his eloquence, and among whom he discovered no one who made the sign of response to his use of the oath of brotherhood. And when he sat down, a storm of applause greeted him, though "the patriotism" he advocated was quite different from the patriotism the rest of the students affected.

The power of speech he discovered in the debating room came to him again one day when the Scotch agent was on the shore of the Loughan directing some evictions. For three years a suburb of the suburb had been going from bad to worse, getting no crops to speak of from their conacre, and being expected to pay handsomely for the failures. There was no apparent reason why the half-dozen families who were being turned out should particularly

care; they had been visited by fever; they were nearly as cold inside as they could be outside their hovels; there were no memories which could pretend to attach them to the spot; and there was a vessel with steam up in the Galport Bay waiting to take them and their like to America if they cared to go. But, the afternoon of the evictions, while the constabulary with much reluctance were leading children to the door and shouldering their seniors, who held on to the barren walls of the cabins with hands, feet, and teeth, Finn again felt his power of speech come to him like a rushing wind. He was standing on a knoll upon the shore of the Loughan; there were about a hundred peasants from Loughan and round bewailing the spectacle. The cry of the evicted rose and mingled with the cry of the curlews from the black island-patches of the lough.

Finn removed his hat, and called upon his countrymen to witness the removal of an industrious peasantry by a foreign horde; invited them, old and young, to cherish to their dying day the spectacle of those ruined ones driven into the street; told them that vengeance

was God's, and that He selected His own ministers, who might not be so very far off—an announcement which seemed only too true to the constabulary when a shower of stones was cast at them.

Finn, however, calmed the storm by descending among the evicted ones. He had the contents of a pocket-book—the offerings of the several brotherhoods. The money was not given him to relieve such distress. But how could he help himself? The temptation to be generous with funds not his own was overwhelming. He rushed, pocket-book in hand, from the knoll and addressed the Scotch agent, who stood between a watchful constabulary, with their hands on their bayonets, and an infuriated peasantry of men, women, and children calling down imprecations on the head of the evictors.

“What'll you take?” said Finn.

“Wha's authoritee hae ye to treat?” asked the agent.

“Will half-a-year's rent reinstate them in the abodes of their ancestors?” asked Finn, in a voice which sounded along the shore and roused the plaudits of all the spectators.

“Haud your tongue, man, about abodes o’ their ancestors. A when piggeries! Have ye half-a-year’s rent inside yon pocket-book? for if ye hae and are willin’ tae pairt wi’ t for the sake o’ thae, gude an’ weel; it’s nae business of mine.”

Finn counted out all the money he had; it was not so much, by half, as the agent asked; but looking from the constabulary to the stone-throwers, that functionary decided to accept it.

“They can a’ gang back again,” he exclaimed, writing an acknowledgment on the foot of his car, while his left hand fingered a revolver. “You’ve gaen them a new lease o’ misery, young sir,” said the agent. “Howsomever, that’s your business and not mine.”

And the ragged families crept into their huts again, while Finn, swept back to Loughan by a cheering crowd, again felt the sweets of applause. He was not, however, on reflection so very certain that the Brotherhood would look upon his charity as a wise investment of means. They always hoped to exchange their gold for blood.

Finn did not make these discoveries about

himself without other people coming to know of it. The County Club smoking-room presently came to speak of it in the following way:

"I say, Butler," said Lord Mountinnes, a peer who was so poor that he could not leave Ireland on a holiday, "there's a rival up at Tasmania, I hear. A youngster from the Shannon, one of the Castle Boffin O'Briens—who, as you know, haven't touched rent for ten years. The widow will change her weeds for him, if he asks her."

"She has more sense and taste," said the R. M. sententiously, adjusting his tie and collar, with a superior air.

"She married old age and respectability the last time," said his lordship, picking up a local newspaper, "she can afford this time to go for youth and the other thing. I say, what's this you have been discovering—another mare's nest?"

"She is a lady who will never demean herself to her child's tutor," said the magistrate, stirring the sugar in his tumbler of hot whiskey.

"That looks like business, Butler—a brace of cannon and a stand of arms. Is this bit of news authentic?"

“But I’m afraid that sickening parson is obtaining some influence over her. I wish he were at Jericho. She has been serious since he arrived on the scene.”

“Well, I suppose I must talk nothing but widow to you, Butler. But you forget poor Owen’s fate. Now, *is* this true about the ordnance?”

“Yes, perfectly true,” said the magistrate; “discovered in a field, as you find it described there. My clerk wrote the paragraph at my dictation. There are vigorous preparations going on for something. But that fellow—that O’Brien—I’ll give *him* a fright. He’s a regular fire-brand, and needs looking after. Dacy tells me he is one of the herd who have paid no fees, and yet I know for a fact that at Loughan, the other day, he turned out some six pounds to stop an eviction. If that doesn’t look like sedition, I don’t know what sedition is.”

“Six pounds!” exclaimed Lord Mountinnes. “It’s a fabulous sum of money. I’ve not had all that at one time since I came of age. Six pounds!”

“I’ll give him a fright one of these days,”

said the magistrate, retiring, as the obnoxious cleric and one of the college professors came into the room.

His lordship mused for a little, and remarked to the new arrivals :

“Everything is fair in love and war, no doubt. But, damn me, if I don’t think Butler carries it too far when he insinuates that he will use the forces of law to put down a rival in love !”

“My lord,” said the cleric, “I trust you will recognise my right to observe that ‘damn me’ is an expression which——” But his lordship had taken up his hat and departed before the advice was completed.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAGISTRATE'S WARNING.

MR. BUTLER made up his mind that the tutor of Mrs. Lynch's son was a dangerous person. He was not quite sure how dangerous he was. He rather suspected that there was nothing further wrong with him than high animal spirits, and an excess of generosity. He could not quite explain the incident of the six pounds paid to the Scotch agent. But he thought it likely that, living as O'Brien did off a whiskey shop, he may have had occasion to pay six pounds away for his aunt, and that surprised by the eviction he had put them into the pockets of the evicted rather than into the pockets of his aunt's creditors.

It was not at all likely that a young lad from the Shannon,—Mr. Butler knew that he was from Ballybunion, and not from Castle Boffin, as he had been told—of previously good

behaviour, and aiming, as he had been informed, at a Lord Chancellorship, should be much of a traitor. He had had him watched (not realising that the men who watched Finn were themselves watched), and the report of the plain clothes men was, that he returned home to his studies regularly, that he read hard, that he occasionally visited at the Claddagh, was sometimes hard at work drinking with half a score of students, going from hotel to hotel and public-house to public-house, until his comrades began to climb up the lamp-posts and turn down the lights. Otherwise he was all right.

Mr. Butler had digested the report, and murmuring to himself that the extinguished lights would take a little off the taxes, he went on to muse that the fellow was far more dangerous than if he had been a convicted patriot with the most blood-thirsty habits. He was just the kind of semi-sentimental young Irishman, with a strapping figure and handsome mien, who would be dangerous to a widow not altogether prosaic in her thoughts and feelings. Visits to the Claddagh! What could they mean? The Claddagh, at least,

the R. M. assured himself, from time immemorial, had nothing to do with Irish discontent. It was as much removed from Irish patriotism as Barcelona or Valentia; nothing could be deduced from the lad's visits to it. Yet he was determined that the young fellow should cease visiting at Tasmania.

"I may have no ghost of a chance myself," he reflected. "Suppose I haven't. Well, it is due from me to my old, dead friend Lynch—though he was a cantankerous beast at times—to protect his widow from the calf-love of a Loop Head peasant."

Mr. Butler, accordingly, made his appearance at Tasmania one afternoon when his court was not sitting, determined to put Mrs. Lynch on the way of finding a new tutor, and of saying as many disagreeable things as he could invent about his friends, the proposers in the town.

He found her "at piscatory employments," as the butler called them to him, through the drawing-room window.

Mrs. Lynch's little lake was well stocked with trout, of a good size; from one end of the lake a brown, deep stream took away the

surplus water to the bay; it had its exit miles away beneath the Bridge at Eileen Conran's house; sometimes a grilse crept up in the early part of the year; and Mrs. Lynch, with a slender trout rod in her hand, was trying for one, when the magistrate crossed the park. He caught sight of her, in a dark dress, looped above her rounded ankles, casting her line into the stream, warily, and with a great deal of masculine dexterity. He walked slowly down upon her, partly to enjoy the spectacle of her exquisite freshness of figure, partly to keep himself from all offence in the way of scaring trout or grilse which might rise and get themselves hooked. Without quite turning round at the sound of his foot among the twigs, Mrs. Lynch knew he was there, and held up her left hand warningly, just as a fish had swallowed the fly. It was a greatly larger animal than she had expected to hook—a salmon, she thought, as the magistrate came down to her side—to judge from the pressure he put upon the rod, and the pace with which he rushed up stream towards the lake.

“Dear Mr. Butler, what shall I do? I have neither gaff nor landing-net, and he is a stur-

geon, I believe, from the weight of him. Look, look at that!" And the salmon, after a momentary sulk, leaped from a lower pool into a higher over a small shelving cliff, revealing in the cool, blue light of the afternoon a lithe well-fed body which, in the scales, would not weigh less than twenty pounds.

"How the deuce did he ever come up?" asked the magistrate.

"I shall have him," said the widow, two pink spots coming out on her cheeks, and her hat, involuntarily pushed off her head, falling down her back, where it was held dangling by the ribbons.

"No, not if you keep his head down stream. If you let him into the lake, he'll reel out all your line and certainly escape."

The rod was bent double; the fish was straining to enter the lake; Mrs. Lynch's excitement became too much for her.

"I shall die of grief if he escapes," said the widow.

"Gently, gently, there, dear Mrs. Lynch! not a tug, but a quiet tendency to tug, and you'll bring his head round."

"No, he is getting the better of me. He

is certainly going to enter the lake. Is there no landing net? Look, Mr. Butler, for something. I could reel him into the edge and wait. Ha! I have him round. He is down stream again. Oh, my poor little trout-rod! Oh, dear Mr. Butler! Oh, Mr. Butler! Now he is over the fall again, and away—escaped—no, not escaped—only gone to the bottom to sulk for a little. Now you have plenty of time to go for a gaff and a casting net. Halloo for it all over the park?”

It was as the widow said: the salmon was sulking, and was not likely to show again for some time. She tightened her line upon him and looked inquiringly at the magistrate.

He was gazing at her with an unmistakable glance of passion. Mrs. Lynch, excited as she was, opened her lips and laughed, not at, but as he judged, sympathetically with him.

“My dear Mrs. Lynch,” said the magistrate, in a very injudicial voice, “you know what my opinion always has been of you. But I declare, before High Heaven, that I never on any occasion saw you look half so beautiful as at this moment.”

“How can you be so irrelevant?” asked

Mrs. Lynch, staring anxiously into the pool, where the salmon still sulked.

Now a salmon was a matter of rather slight interest to the magistrate. He would take a hundred of them in half a season's fishing and not think a great deal of it. He was not therefore so impressed by Mrs. Lynch's fish as by Mrs. Lynch herself. And neither the sight of the bent rod nor the strained line put out of his mind what was there when he came up to Tasmania to advise her to get rid of the obnoxious tutor.

"Mrs. Lynch," he resumed, while the salmon still remained immovable, as if it were an eel beneath a stone, "Mrs. Lynch, I have evidence in my possession that the tutor of your boy is a very dangerous fellow. You must get rid of him. He will probably be apprehended soon, and it will save you a great deal of trouble to part with him in time."

"The tutor's a very good fellow, and I shall do nothing of the sort, Mr. Butler. And if you get up a prosecution because he happens to be a patriotic Irishman, I shall consider you so shabby that I shall never

“speak to you again. So please to be more agreeable.”

“I want to save you a great deal of trouble in the future.”

“If you wished to give me a great deal of pleasure in the present, you would try to remember that I have a large salmon at the end of my line, and that I have neither gaff nor landing-net. Oh! I could almost scream. If Mr. O'Brien had been here he would have rushed up to the neck to get that fish for me. But you——”

“Now, you are unjust to me,” said Mr. Butler, trotting behind the widow, who was following her fish down stream at a rapid pace. Beneath the shadow of some elm branches, the fish again paused, and Mr. Butler, puffing a little, remarked,

“Mrs. Lynch, I wish you would hearken to the voice of reason—of reasonable affection, and put yourself, and that dear child, under my care.”

“You haven't the impudence to propose to marry me when I am engaged in a life-and-death struggle with a salmon;” cried Mrs. Lynch, again posting after the fish.

They were nearing a shallow ford, where there were stepping stones. If Mr. Butler had not been blind with love, he would have seen that at the stepping stones, the line would likely break if the salmon were not delicately handled. But he only saw the looped dress and the perfect ankles, and the sunlight in the face of the widow, as he pursued her down the stream. Again there was a pause.

"Beatrice, am I to be your protector for life? Am I to be the one who is to keep you from harm?"

The salmon was at the ford and had wound the line round a stone.

"I will lose him—I will lose him!" cried Mrs. Lynch pathetically.

"Beatrice, listen to me," implored the magistrate.

"Yes, yes, I know all about it. Gone—he is gone—Oh, save him, dear Mr. Butler, and I will marry you or anything."

"You will?"

"I will," said Mrs. Lynch, stepping into the water to save her bending rod.

"I accept the promise," cried the magistrate, rushing into the shallow water.

The salmon snapped the line ; but he was so large, and the water was so low, that the ridge of his back made a visible wave. The magistrate gave chase ; the fish bounded into the air, the line was broken, but there was enough to lay hold of. He caught it and dragged the great brute to the widow's feet. She herself landed the salmon, the largest she had at any time caught.

"Beatrice," said the magistrate, spattered from head to heel, removing his hat to wipe his red brow, "this is the happiest moment of my life. You have promised to be mine, and I know you will keep your promise."

"I have not acquired the national habit of lying," said the widow, with frigid emphasis.

CHAPTER XVI.

BACK TO THE SHANNON.

FINN had a letter from Father Hugh Kenealy as his session drew to a close, hoping that he would return by packet to Ballybunion and spend some of his holidays there. Loop Head, he assured him, would receive him with open arms. His dear mother was dying to see him, and there was work to do about the farm that it would be good for his health to undertake, after the arduous labours of the college. No doubt, he said, Finn would be able to speak Greek, which was somewhat of a disadvantage for him, Father Kenealy, as he had forgotten the more colloquial authors, but in Latin he would still meet him anywhere between Plautus and Suetonius, and hope to come off victorious. The packet would pass Ballybunion on Sunday, if it left the harbour of Galport on Friday,

wind and weather permitting as much. Father Hugh was to be remembered to Father John. And would Finn ask Father John to purchase in the ecclesiastical department of a certain shop bands for his gown, at a certain other shop a controversial work on the Vatican, and in another a parcel of real Irish Blackguard, for his snuff was done?

All these commissions Finn saw executed for his old friend, and in the month of April, the prizes having been distributed to the men who had won them, he was free to leave Loughan and the city of Galport.

Mrs. Lynch was unwilling to part with him, he was overjoyed to see.

"How *can* I let you go to Loop Head?" she had asked him, in tones whose plaintiveness fell on his heart like the notes of a minor tune bewailing the fortunes of Ireland.

"I have my mother, madam, to see, and some things on our property to look after. It has not been managed for her so well since I came to college."

"These agents are so tiresome," said the widow; "you should be your own agent, if you wish to realise rent, Mr. O'Brien."

“There are other duties, madam, in connection with property than the realization of rent,” said Finn. “When poor men are living on patches of rock, the soil of which they had literally to create from the sand of the sea and the tangles of the sand, they should not be pressed for rent. It should be enough that they have the fortitude to work at all against such heavy odds. I would never exact rent under these circumstances.”

“I am afraid you are a little Quixotic. I have heard of your paying the rents near Loughan from your own pocket-money. The story was told me by a friend——” here Mrs. Lynch sighed heavily and paused in embarrassment.

“If you are not a little more exacting, and a little less unworldly, my dear Mr. O’Brien, it is very certain that you will suffer a good deal, for it is a hard, greedy, exacting world. For myself I can’t live without rents. I dislike them exceedingly. It pains me to take them, especially when I know some of the circumstances of the tenants; but there is Morris, and the horses, and my house in London. But I think it very, very generous of you, Mr.

O'Brien, not only to forego your rents at Loop Head, but to put yourself to so much trouble as to teach, and then to spend the money you make by work in relieving poor, distressed wretches. You will be a great Irishman yet, and I shall live to know that I have been honoured by your visits to Tasmania. They tell me that you are a heaven-born orator. I should like so much to hear you speak."

From which it appears that Mrs. Lynch had altered her ideas about Finn: that she no longer beheld in him the ridiculous person of her earlier acquaintance, though it is certain that the magistrate, now a daily visitor, tried to present him in that light, when he found he could not produce the impression of his being dangerous.

On parting with Morris, Finn had a fresh experience of the place he had made for himself in the affections of the household. Morris led him through the stables and gravely criticised the horses in a balanced, periodic style, very different from what he used to assume when he had the companionship of the grooms only as a model. It was while he

was giving a handful of oats to his own pony that he entrusted the secret to Finn.

“Do you know, Mr. O’Brien, I’m glad I shot the captain yon time. He would have married mamma. And I’ll take a shot at that fat magistrate too, if he doesn’t clear out.”

Finn started in amazement. He had been so often credited by members of the brotherhood with the death of the captain that he had got to believe it was really he who had shot him. But here was the whole story from the lips of his pupil, not to mention the threat of removal against a man whom it would be very convenient to have removed. “Do you say so, Morris Lynch?” was all that the astonished tutor was able to ask before he set off to the pier on his journey to Loop Head.

The packet was anchored at the mouth of the Loughan; it was a sloop with three for a crew, and lay low in the water by reason of the barrels and packages which filled the hold and crowded the deck. There was barely room at the mast for the men who worked the jib and foresail. The great mainsail was in charge of the helmsman, who stood at a tiller just behind the cabin, a dark hole with one side

seat and a bucket for convenience in case of sickness.

Finn had his box lowered into the cabin, and it was with no slight feeling of exhilaration that he felt the breeze and the tide carry the sloop across the bar. Not used to the sea, he thought at first that she was running perilously near to the white ridge of ware on the opposite side of the bay; but presently the foam was run across from gunwale to gunwale, the great mainsail flapped, the jib and foresail fluttered and bellied in their ropes, and the sloop, with a fair breeze, was on her way to the Atlantic.

It was good for Finn that, just opposite the Claddagh, the sloop ran past Michael Conran's hooker, with his admiral's ribbon at the peak, and Michael called out, "You've a valuable man, there. Look after him, boys."

An old sail was sent down to the cabin for him on the back of the recommendation, and the screwed-up faces of the men and the indifferent countenance of the lad looked at him with more tolerance.

It was a wonderful spring day. The hills of Clare were bathed in blue light, and from

the margin to the summits Finn read, in patches of green meadow and in the moving forms of red cattle, the industry of his fellow-countrymen. Along the Connemara shore, a gun-boat was slowly steaming; Finn shook his fist at it; but five minutes later he lost all his anger in watching the divers who disappeared on either side of the swiftly-moving sloop, and the incoming of large and still longer lines of wave as she swept towards the Arran crags on her way south. There was an indescribable delight for the lad in this return to Ballybunion. He stretched himself on the cabin head and looked from shore to shore. The breath of the Gulf Stream was floating over the land, warm and genial; now the sloop was in the Atlantic, and as far as his eye could see it was one long glimmer and undulation of ocean. Here and there a white sail moved through the blue expanse and joined the snowy clouds of the moving horizon. Otherwise the sloop was alone, with Ireland on her left, and the Atlantic stretching away to America—that home of so many of Finn's race. It was all very impressive to the lad, returning to his native village after his first

plunge into the world. And what a strange world he had found it! Already, though he had been intended for grammar and the smaller scholastic exercises, he had a hand in that strange world's affairs. Proud thought! He was an Irish rebel, and an influential one—a rebel who held the strings of a plot which should yet drive the braggart English into the sea, and give to these cliffs Irishmen for their defenders. Little did the English know that some of these white sails in the horizon were, it might be, ships dropping arms into hookers for the great day of rebellion. With such thoughts, and between eating and sleeping, Finn beguiled the time till Sunday morning opened out for the sloop the wide estuary of the Shannon, with its deep, green waves.

They were on the outlook for him at Ballybunion; and he had himself and his things transferred to a turf-boat which lay waiting the sloop's arrival. The little hamlet on the heights was at chapel when he went into it, and he heard Father Kenealy's deep voice thundering at the altar as he passed.

His mother's hut lay half-a-mile from Ballybunion; she was not very well, he was

told, or she would have been at the boat to meet him. Yet when she stood at the door of the hut, and seeing Finn, stepped down the garden patch, with her slow, dignified walk, and laid her brown head on his bosom and cried upon it, he thought her the noblest woman he had ever seen. How different it all was to be sure from the city of Galport.

The magpies had already begun their spring house-keeping on the tree at the side of the house ; and here was the pig, vast and rotund, not able to rise from its wallow in the sunshine, but casting a sly eye of recognition on him all the same.

And the brown pony had his head over the iron gate, off the green paddock where the well-spring of water was. In the field towards the bog, he saw that the wheat had already begun to spring.

“You’re taller, and broader, and—Oh, you haven’t forgotten St. Theresa and your old mother !”

The hut was in no way altered since Finn had left it: in the outer room the pig still apparently went out and in, as she had a mind to ; the red turf blazed from the centre of the

floor, and sent its smoke right through the roof. His own bed was still a cupboard, and his mother's bed-room—the cleanest part of the hut—was half a dairy and partly a fowl house. There was a fowl sitting suspiciously on half a score of eggs beneath the altar.

Everything seemed to recognise him long before the chapel service was over, and friends and neighbours, gorgeously dressed in magenta petticoats and blue cloaks, in yellow leather breeches and blue coats and top-hats, flocked past and stopped at the gate to say a pleasant word to Master O'Brien. Finn tried the signs of the Brotherhood on several of his male neighbours; but they were all alike innocent of their meaning. The "cause" had not yet reached Loop Head. The joy of Mrs. O'Brien at her son's return was only equalled by her anxiety at his change of manner. Not that he was colder to her or in any way unkind. But he no longer, as she supposed, talked in the simple Irish manner. His English was Englishman's English, as they no doubt spoke it in Galport; but to her ear it conveyed sounds as if from a strange land, and she was a little afraid of them.

"You will have seen many great people in the city, 'Finn, darlin,'" said his mother, after she had laid out a pleasant meal of eggs, fish, and whiskey for him.

"Yes, I've gone a good deal into society," said Finn. "My friend the Bishop was just remarking to me the other evening that I seemed well-fitted for society."

"The Saint protect you, boy! and what is a great man like a bishop like now?"

"Well, let me see, then, mother—is old Dan McKendrick alive?"

"He is, the old, blackguard, more's the pity."

"Well, he's the very living image of the Bishop of Galport—the same dignity, the same sagacity of expression, the same aspiring after something, which, if it is whiskey in Dan's case, is probably holiness and the ambition to be a Holiness on the part of the Bishop."

"Oh, well, surely, boy, but you must never speak evil of dignitaries; and is it Latin that his Excellence talks?"

"No, indeed then, but undignified English, and take him all in all Father Hugh is a far more dignified man."

“ Say you so, Finn O’Brien, and a very little of the whiskey will go a long way, my darlin’, for you have Father Hugh to see, and Mary Scanlon was at the Head looking for the sloop at five in the mornin’, and I hope you have brought something for her. She’s turned out a nice, hearty girl, and has passed many’s the night with me since you left. You will have to say a kind word to Mary. Would there be many girls in Galport now? ”

“ The Galport young ladies,” said Finn pompously, “ are rather exclusive, but I flatter myself that I know some of them very well indeed.”

“ You have a high opinion of the lady of Tasmania. Father Hugh, when he was reading your letters to me, seemed to think a very high opinion. Is she as good as she is beautiful, Finn O’Brien? ”

“ Mother, don’t mention her in the same breath with Mary Scanlon. Unfortunately, she’s not an Irish—she’s an English lady ; an alien, but a lovely and lovable alien, and one that I would give my life for her smiles. She owns estate upon estate in England, Scotland, and Ireland. She’s a great lady.”

“And your Professor, Finn, what’s a Professor like?”

“Oh, he’s not much to look at, a Professor; but there’s Father Hugh! Father Hugh!”

And Finn rushed out upon the road with a packet of snuff in one hand, and gown-bands and a book on the Vatican in the other.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LETTER.

THE Post Office at Ballybunion was not an important institution. It consisted of two drawers behind the counter of a small grocery store, and one broken pane, through which letters were inserted to fall upon the floor. Sometimes they tumbled through the drawers or window, and were chewed up by a fox-terrier, and got posted in his stomach.

A letter to Finn O'Brien escaped that frequent fatality, however, and was handed out to him, with a snigger on the face of the lettered dame who saw the address. It ran,

F. O'BRIEN, ESQ.,

(of Galport College),

LANDOWNER,

BALLYBUNION,

LOOP HEAD.

Landowner ! He read and re-read the word ; It was in Mrs. Lynch's writing. Finn did not think he had deceived her by leading her to believe that he had property on the Shannon. Such a thought never occurred to him.

Many O'Briens either now had or once had land. Had not all Ireland belonged to the clans at one time, and was there any harm in making a past a present for social purposes ? So argued the casuist, though if he had had the slightest feeling with regard to the deceit practised, he would have entertained it in connection with the widow rather than any other * person he had met. But it did not occur to him. No agreeable deceit ever occurred to him as a breach of a written and an unwritten law. He took his letter away from Ballybunion and strolled with it to the cliffs and lay on the purple heather at the foot of a round tower before he opened it. For he had not expected her to write ; and he promised himself the materials of a sweet, poetic dream. At length he took courage and opened it. It was not very long :—

"MY DEAR MR. O'BRIEN,—I forgot to say to you when I saw you that I am taking Morris to London

this month. We shall be there, probably, till next winter, when, as you are aware, I am obliged to come back to Ireland in obedience to a peremptory wish expressed in Major Lynch's will. Otherwise, I am afraid I would not come again to this wild West, except for a little hunting. Terrible threats have been conveyed to me by post. I have had the number of policemen doubled, and poor Captain Owen's soldiers have all to be brought back again. But that is not what I want to say. It is, that if you are in Galport during the summer you are to use Tasmania freely. There will always be two servants and the gamekeeper. If you should come to London, then I shall be at home to you, for your kindness to Morris, who sends all sorts of messages to you. You are to bring him, he says, the guillemot, and solan geese, and sea-gull, and I know not how many other kinds of eggs, which he protests you promised to find him.

"Believe me to be,

"Very truly yours,

"BEATRICE H. LYNCH.

"P.S.—I am sending you a little portrait of dear Morris. I will send one of my own. Mr. Butler has been in, and I must add that you will require to be careful, if you are a patriot. He uses strong language about you—says you are a fire-brand, but believes that you will make a good lawyer yet, when you have sown your patriotic oats. Be very careful. B. H. L."

How often Finn read his letter he could not himself count.

“Finn O’Brien, Landowner.” After all, might it not be a prophetic stroke on the widow’s part? Might it not mean that he, Finn O’Brien, would yet be master of Tasmania, the lands at Lough Head and on the shores of Clare, the house in London and the accompanying wealth? Finn lay for a little and saw himself, in a red coat, pressing the hounds behind Loughan; or in knickerbockers, trolling in the Loughan, his tenants touching their hats to him as he rode amongst them; his agent, if he had one, looking subservient in front of the County Club.

In the meantime, however, he must do something to strengthen the esteem the mother and son held him in. He would fetch them the eggs—that was not difficult. About Ballybunion there were always half-a-dozen lounging lads willing to engage in the hazardous sport of cliff-climbing—if they found a leader. Finn himself had practised his fingers and knees on the boldest outlines of the coast; so by aid of Mary Scanlon’s two brothers, his mother’s farm labourer and some others, he had in the course of a few hours a row of cormorants’ light blue eggs, a great

collection of the pied and speckled eggs of the sea-gull, and several hatfuls of rock-pigeons' and starlings'. They were won with considerable gallantry, for there was no way of reaching some of them except by joining half-a-dozen cows' tethers together and by dangling over the ledge.

Apart from the destination of the eggs, however, after they were got Finn felt the excitement of finding them to fully repay the trouble. Had his foot gone out of the loop of the last tether, he would have been precipitated, Heaven knows how many hundred feet, to where the sea was surging in rough masses of white. But, as he dangled, he never allowed himself to look down. He gazed straight up the cliff and beyond it, and let the shrieking birds fly round him, unnoticed, while he swept this nook and that cranny with his elbow and filled his hat and ascended.

Never had the boys of Ballybunion seen a collection so rapidly and daringly made. It took a good hour's work to bore the ends of the eggs and blow the yolk upon the heather—a process which was surveyed by some

hundreds of gulls, who angrily wheeled overhead.

Finn had them all neatly packed, in time, and sent round by the sloop to Galport, before the young squire and his mother went away to town.

He did not forget his work as secretary to the Brotherhood; for he collected half-a-dozen choice spirits and administered to them the oath of fidelity, appointed one of them—"a mercantile assistant," he called himself, because he wielded a scoop in the boreen off the main-road to Kilcree—secretary, and unfolded some of the aims and objects of the great Mystery at Dublin. There was some difficulty about opening a campaign at Loop Head; for the estate being the property of an eccentric gentleman who never took any rent, there was no shooting to be done on that score.

"Annoy the Protestants, any way," Finn advised them, "and bring your organisation to bear upon any man who expresses gratitude to the old blackguard who professes so much virtue because he abstains from taking rent. Why, what other would he do? Does the land not belong to us, boys? *Ex nihilo*

nihil fit." And the little society felt that it was something to have a college-bred leader to appoint their policy for them. "Arms," Finn told them, "you will be supplied with from Manhattan—guns warranted to draw Saxon blood at a thousand yards—think o' that, boys—as far as from here to the tower. You'll require to practise drill too. You know, of course, that I have approached Thaddy Murphy, with the cork leg, on the subject of the Brotherhood. He's a fine old soldier and would teach you your drill, if he would join. I leave him in your hands, boys, for he refuses to take up the cause yet. But remember there are ways of extending your membership. I got fifteen bullets put through my hat. See, there's the mark of a singe along the top of my skull yet. That was how I was made a member, boys. And see me now. There's different ways of practising the shooting and bringing in the unwilling. And you must get Thaddy at all hazards, even if you kill a policeman beforehand."

"He's a quiet man, Serjeant Wyse, and hasn't made an apprehension for four years," pleaded one of the new brothers.

“I’ve no fault to find with him,” said Finn, “but you’ll not be a brother six months without learning what it is we are making war against. Briefly it is this,—against England and Scotland, until every Englishman and Scotchman who has a place in the customs, a position in the police force, a post under the Government, a farm or estate, a business, a church, or a school, shall be compelled, with the muzzle of a Manhattan rifle at his back, to retire to his own country or over the seas, where there’s plenty of room for him.”

“Hurrah, hurrah!” said the new brotherhood, and Finn went out from among them to read Mrs. Lynch’s letter again.

* * * *

After the first meeting in the road with Father Hugh, Finn rather avoided him. He was a religious man, a scholar, and not at all discontented with the sphere into which he believed Providence had thrust him. When Finn called on him, he expressed great disappointment with his attainments. Far from being improved by his visit to Galport, he thought, after a little conversation, the lad had degenerated, and he told him that it would be

better for him to plant his mother's potatoes and reap his mother's wheat, and send her eggs and butter to market, if he kept a pure heart and a manly courage, than to be trifling in the city of Galport, if he was not to become a scholar.

Finn resented his plain-speaking, and, by the flush on his cheek and the sparkle in his eye, showed his indignation.

"But I tell you it is true, Finn O'Brlen. If, instead of pursuing your studies, you have been idling your time away in Galport, then I say you are better to be a peasant to the end of your days than a man-about-town, knowing little and pretending to much."

"I'm not pretending to anything particular whatever, Father Hugh. You didn't expect me to come back as accomplished in Latin and Greek as you are yourself. Why, you have been at your books for more than a quarter of a century and nothing to take your attention away from them, and I'm just a beginner, more's the pity."

The priest's dark, olive-complexioned face relaxed its gravity a little, as he replied,

"There's truth in what you say, boy;

perhaps I had extravagant expectations, which it is impossible for one so young to fulfil; and it may be that scholarship is not the province allotted you for work by the Almighty. But I would have liked you to have been more of a scholar and less of a patriot. Why, you were happy in your sphere, and might have discharged all the duties of life honourably and profitably on the little farm. You seemed to have aspirations, however, and I gave you the encouragement I thought they deserved. But I begin to misdoubt my own judgment when you come back a poor Latinist and a hot agitator. Why, Master O'Brien, the village of Ballybunion is topsy-turvy with politics since you came back. I am bitterly and grievously disappointed."

"Father Hugh, you were so long on the Continent that you have lost sympathy with your own people. I *am* a patriot, and proud to be taken for one. It's far better and sweeter to me than any reputation of Greek or Latin. Come to Galport just for a little, father, and you'll maybe take a turn at patriotism too. If you had seen the sights and known the deeds I've known, you would never rest on

your bed till all the English and Scotch, from Sherkin to the Causeway, were overboard the island."

"Perhaps I am a little out of the world," said the priest mildly, "but perhaps I know what I am saying, Finn O'Brien, when I tell you that I was once at Naples, the loveliest of God's works on earth, with everything, from grapes and figs to corn and fish, falling into the people's mouths. And what is it they do? They lie in the sun and let God feed them, and they think when they have taken a meal out of His hand, that turning round on their faces and sleeping is all that is left them to do in the world. Now, what is it they require? They want the English Government to take charge of them, and Englishmen to be stirring amongst them, and in six months' time they would learn that God had other things in store for His children than food and sleep. I mention Naples to you, Finn O'Brien, because I'm often reminded of it in this lovely, gracious climate of ours—this exemption from the payment of rent, and the life our people lead under it. Sorry am I to think it, but half the men and women of my parish are just Neapolitan

lazzaroni—do-nothing feeders and sleepers in the warm sun and genial air. What they need is one or more of these organising, active, down-right Englishmen, who will take no thought for their sensitivity, but who will exact a daily tale of work. Why, boy, if Ireland were free to-morrow, I believe Munster and Connaught would turn on their backs and sleep, and waken up and ask to be fed by the new Government, and if it wasn't gratis fed,—well, there would be a revolution, to say the least of it, the day after. Your patriotism, Finn O'Brien, is a chimera and a vain imagining. Cast it off as if it were a poisoned shirt, and don the garment of contentment and patience. You are not ill-off: you may be better off still, if you do not adopt that noisy industry of the nineteenth-century agitation; and if you will be content to walk in the paths cut out for you, in God's providence, by the history of your race."

"I will never be a cowardly slave," cried Finn, starting to his feet. "There is only one path for me—the path that leads to Ireland's enfranchisement, ay,—if I should be loaded with irons for it, and the last drop of my blood should be shed upon the scaffold for it. Living

out here on this headland, visited only by the sea-gulls, what can you know of Ireland's need of deliverance? I tell you thousands and hundreds of thousands of our countrymen are starving in the West, and the price of their food is carried to English banks for English stomachs to consume."

"We will not argue about it further, Mr. O'Brien," said Father Hugh, regretfully. "You are young and you will grow older. I can only pray that your indignation may not return upon you, to blast your life and increase the miseries of your countrymen."

CHAPTER XVIII.

APOLOGETICS.

IT was noticed in the Barracks that Captain Jeffery, after the evening when the gun-boat did not come ashore, fell into a state of gloom and irritation. He was not exactly discourteous to his colonel; but he answered the colonel, once or twice, so sharply that the great man took him aside and administered a severe reprimand to him.

“Captain Jeffery,” said he of the frosty hair and rigid attitude, “I notice a growing pertness in your manners to your brother officers and to myself, which it is as well for you to know that I shall not tolerate. Confound it, sir! it’s a soldier’s first duty to wear a cheerful face. Time enough to put on the look of a death’s head when you are going out at fifty on half-pay, never having had the privilege to smell powder. But a youngster like you—to go about shedding misery on every side of

you—blast, it sir! I will not have it. I've asked Dr. Sullivan about you, and he can suggest no explanation of your miserable, cross, discontented behaviour. If there was anything wrong with your inside or otherwise, your black-and-tan countenance might be excused; though for my part I've always made it a point of professional honour to look happy. Yes, happy. Hang it, sir! you needn't laugh. I can look happy when I am most out of sorts. My calculation is that a sour countenance on a field day is equal to a ton of enemy's shell well directed. It throws away advantages, it dispirits the men, it reflects discredit upon the owner of the face. You know that? Then why the devil do you adopt a course of conduct, sir, calculated to promote so much mischief? Do you think you can wear a miserable face in barracks, and when you are called out to action look happy by an effort of your own will? No, sir, you cannot. A face takes on an habitual, set expression, which it can't throw off. Captain Owen? What about Captain Owen? He is dead—dead and buried and out of it; but is it the part of an officer and a gentleman to put mourning even into his

lineaments for a brother-officer who is gone? Certainly not. I take it that you are no sorrier for the poor gentleman than I am. But do I go about with tears in my eyes or voice? It's not Captain Owen? Well, if it's gratuitous, spontaneous, self-begotten gloom which possesses you, the sooner you throw it off the better. Go down town and make friends with the tradesmen, and knock up an acquaintanceship with their daughters. Damn it, sir! go outside the barracks and break one of the ten commandments—I don't care which, so long as you come back here with a face like a Christian."

Colonel Malcolm had a great partiality for the young captain. He knew that he got through more work and in a more intelligent way than the whole officeriate put together. He would have been sorry if any occasion had arisen to remove him from the regiment; but no partiality ever hindered him from speaking his mind. Having once found out from the regimental surgeon that there was no physical ailment, he was determined to make short work with the long face which was being assumed by one of his brightest men.

"Try some of that stuff, sir, and, the next time I see you, let me hear of some scheme for amusing the men or poking up your comrades, or something—fill up your glass, there's nothing in it that can hurt you."

When Jeffery had taken the colonel's glass of wine and gone out from his room, the colonel stood looking out of his window into the barracks yard. The Rev. Mr. Chesson was crossing from the stables to the gate. He too wore an expression of regret and discontent.

"They can't all be in low spirits about Owen," he reflected aloud. "I'm hanged if I don't get that man Chesson removed. I'll sit down this very hour and suggest his transference to a remote and wicked regiment. He's much too goody-goody. Hang the fellow! I believe he has been inquiring into the souls of every man in the regiment. Now, what we want is a jolly, open-hearted parson, who can play a little whist, and go about without finding it necessary to talk hell to the men. I will suggest that he be sent to Kilmainham or Portland. The fellow talks, and preaches as if there wasn't a gentleman in the regiment.

I must have a fellow who takes his theology from his colonel, and not from the Archbishop of Canterbury."

But the truth was that Captain Jeffery, though sorely vexed for the untoward end of his old comrade, was wrestling with himself. He was a haunted man since that first interview he had with the fisher-girl of the Claddagh. Each time he had seen her he had been more impressed with her beauty; and upon the night of the storm, when he proposed to her that she should leave the Claddagh and start life on a grand scale, with himself as her Providence and protector, he had been more confirmed in the impression of her loveliness. A hundred times a day he was thinking of her; and Larry O'Shee, whom the mess had voted a blundering ass, he patted and protected, until Larry became almost ashamed of the mission of spy which had been set him by the Brotherhood. From Larry he heard a great deal about Eileen, which only inflamed his imagination the more in her favour. He heard the story of her parentage—how her mother was a great lady, who had joined the Nunnery and had been run away with by Michael Conran, before he was

raised to the kingship of the community. Larry embellished his narrative by a number of touches which he thought would raise the Conrans in the captain's estimation; and delighted him beyond measure when he affirmed that in the matter of lovers, though Eileen could marry any of a hundred fishermen and of half-a-dozen wealthy merchants in the city of Galport, she was so far removed from them all by her parentage that she would not think of such a thing as encouraging any of them.

"Sure, she's not for the likes of them, at all," said enthusiastic Larry, encouraged to talk by his master's evident anxiety to hear more and still more about her.

"But she must marry some day. A girl like her is sure to want to marry. Are you sure she is not in love with anybody in the Claddagh?"

"In love, your honour? She's in love with Ireland, and it's her country that's her sweetheart, though she does argle-bargle in the market and hould her own for the price o' the fish that comes ashore in the rear o' the admiral's boat."

"Ireland's a sweetheart, Larry, that never did much for anybody."

“ It’s the thruth your honour is tellin’ there. Comin’, Dr. Sullivan, sir.”

Such conversations were frequent enough ; and after a few weeks’ interval Captain Jeffery made up his mind that he had behaved intolerably to the girl. Not that he was above the morality of the line regiment in which he served. The captain had accepted the current estimate of life peculiar to his friends, which may be said to have been a view composed of the sentiments extracted from love-songs meant for Arcady, and drinking-songs appropriate for Valhalla.

For Captain Jeffery there was no necessary relationship of morality between his own grade in society and that grade in Ireland which is nearest to the earth. It was his tacit opinion that if “ a gentleman ” troubled himself about a low-born girl and felt an interest in her, because she was pretty, then the girl was honoured by the attention. * Like his brother-officers, he had honoured several such girls, in different parts of the world, and had exchanged their letters for other similar letters passing between his comrades and temporary sweet-hearts taken up and abandoned, according to

the exigencies of the regiment's march. There was, however, a sharp distinction drawn between the behaviour suitable for "ladies" and that allowable for mere "females." The "female" came from nobody cared where, and after her brief life of caressing was over, she returned to that nameless oblivion; and there was an end of it. She was not even admitted as an allowable theme for mixed conversation; but there were times, when the wine had gone round freely, and no domestic susceptibilities could be offended, when it was permissible to discuss her, as if she were one of the occupants of the stables.

It can't be said, therefore, of Captain Jeffery that he looked back upon his proposal to Eileen Conran, to take rooms and live luxuriously, as any serious breach of morality. He could still face up ladies whose life and thoughts were pure, and think of them purely. They were, as it were, of a different sex from the other kind, related by a common kinship to sisters and mothers, unrelated to the prettiness which emerged from obscurity to be toyed with, for a time, and set aside.

The story of the Nunnery was, indeed, the first cause of uneasiness on his mind. After all, then, this girl was not one of the hundreds of thousands who were so near the earth that it did not matter what came of them. She was not of the sort to whom a brief butterfly existence would be a gilding for all time to the unhappy lowliness of her lot. And yet she was but a fisherman's daughter. Captain Jeffery tried various devices to get her image out of his recollection. He revived his mathematics for a little ; he read fortification as if he had been in a regiment of artillery ; he rushed about the country getting up its antiquities. But it was of no avail. The more he tried to banish the thought of her, the more he felt himself obliged to recall the flashing darkness of her eye, the mixture of modesty and assurance in her manner, and the outburst of militant virginity with which she trampled under foot the proposal he had made. "I will see her and ask her forgiveness," he at last decided, one midnight, after vainly trying to conquer the recollection. "Then I shall decide never to see her again. On the morrow, however, he could make no business

outside the barracks, so he sat down and wrote to her :

BARRACKS, GALPORT.

March —

MY DEAR EILEEN CONRAN,—The other night when I called at your house, I was received with princely hospitality. I shall never forget the magnificent flavour of the viands : the herring, so fresh, so luscious, so wonderfully cooked ; the “Lord Lieutenant” so royal in his grilled condition ; the whiskey so mellow and searching in its quality. I fear I took advantage of your hospitality to propose to you an arrangement that was very unsuited for one of your thinking. It did not occur to me that the proposal would not meet your views. We soldiers, who have to go from country to country, lose sight sometimes of the manners and customs of these islands. Besides, I had been so generously refreshed at your table that I spoke, I may say, under the influence of wine. Consider the whole thing as an after-dinner speech, and accept a sincere apology. You have my unstinted admiration for the manner in which you acted.

Yours admiringly,

ARTHUR HEDLEY VICARS JEFFERY.

He could not quite get it out of his mind that he was somehow honouring the girl, who lived beneath the thatch at the Nunnery walls. So he wrote condescendingly to her, with a latent and unconfessed hope that she might

answer the letter and not think so badly of him. He gave it into the hands of Larry O'Shee, and that faithful servant, having some hours at liberty to amuse himself in the city, posted the letter and proceeded elsewhere than the Claddagh.

CHAPTER XIX.

EILEEN AT HOME.

EILEEN was moving about from her kitchen to her garden when Sister Maria brought in a letter to her. When she was not at market, the girl had enough to do. The king's daughter was not an office which was allowed to be a sinecure at the Claddagh. Michael Conran, in virtue of his position, was a Brehon, but the administration of the law was more often undertaken by Eileen than by himself. The Brehon is a survival of that ancient Celtic period, when there were no Saxons in Ireland; it survived so strongly at the Claddagh that there was not even a petty sessions held once in ten years to settle local disputes. All the disputes came to Michael, who held his court on the bridge, sometimes emphasising a decision with his fist, but more often getting it accepted as promptly as if he had a strong

executive at his back to enforce it. Practically he had such an executive, for the tradition of the Claddagh was all against English law and justice; and as it was everybody's custom to bow to the Brehon for the time being, grumblers were soon silenced if they offered to proceed to extremes. In the case of a strong Brehon like Michael it was a word of reproach and a blow in reply. But suitors at the bridge had once or twice carried their grievances to the city and placed them before the resident magistrate; when they returned to the Claddagh they found their boat with a mighty hole in the bottom of it, their nets torn into threads, a dunghill carted into their front-room, and every bit of furniture smashed up. Then a ban was put upon them; they could not get companionship nor food in the village, and in the course of time it was known that they had put a new keel on their boat and sailed away to another coast to find a livelihood. So that the Brehon had an informal executive, as efficient in its way as a constabulary and a barracks.

It was Eileen, however, who tempered the administration of justice with mercy, and on the bridge her appearance was always noted

by suitors as a signal of hope to the aggrieved. When the court was finished and Michael had departed with the male crowd to spend the day between the pier and the public-house, Eileen had unnumbered nets to hang out and directions to give about bait, and messengers to consult about the signs of the heavens, the direction of shoals as indicated by the winged fishermen in the horizon, and now and again one or two duties in connection with the Brotherhood. To judge from the way in which her voice pervaded the creek, the bridge, and the Nunnery walls, she seemed to enjoy her life of toil. She sang a great deal at her work, strains that were as old as Ireland, words that had been passed on, from century to century, by an outcast people who had sought the shelter of mountainous nooks and breezy corners of Western bays. She did not sing them because they were old and she loved to dwell upon the past. They flowed to her lips because they had found lodgment in her heart in the years when she began to lisp. They were as genuine to her as the primroses to the side of the rivulet, the heather to the hill, the purple ware to the rocks.*

Many a time did a poor, pale sister, within the Nunnery walls, listen to the Celtic strains of the girl, and wonder what it was out there that in the days of her liberty she had missed which this singing girl enjoyed. And, with her fingers on her beads and her lips to her crucifix, she would silently implore the Unknown to give her something of the rapture which was Eileen's. But she did not feel it, shut out as she was from the sea, the sun, and mankind.

Sister Maria—the secular sister whose vows allowed her to be useful, and to come and go between the Nunnery and the world—met Eileen in her garden. All the cases had been tried on the bridge; the men were away lounging; the girl had nothing to do that she did not make for himself. She was, as was frequent with her, thinking of that subterranean charge, the armoury, which, by driving out Ireland's enemies, was going to put an end to those hungry, naked crowds who, day and night, passed through the Claddagh to Galport harbour “keening,” till the tears stood in her eyes for them and their pitiful case. There may have been an exceptional exultation in

her, as the sister approached her, for the latter said with a grave face,

“Eileen, you are in need of mortification. Your happiness is a reproach to us all. I think you must learn to read and write—it would solemnise you and give you a sense of your sins.”

“Sure then, Sister Maria, and don’t you hear the birds sing on the trees all day long, and some of them all night, and is it mortification you would give them? And I know that I’m a sinner, and what would books tell me more? And if it’s to make me unhappy, what would I read them for; have I not the village on my mind? And don’t I need all my cheeriness for the work I have to do?”

Sister Maria was a plump nun, who might have been taken for a young matron with a nursery, so little did she look as if she had abandoned the world.

“A letter has come to the Nunnery, addressed to you,” she said, taking Captain Jeffery’s epistle from an inside pocket of her enveloping cloak; “you will like me to read it to you.”

“Well, then, I’m not so sure of that. Let me look at it, will you?”

Eileen stared at the envelope—there were no marks to indicate that it had any connection with the secret societies; then she led the way inside the house, and put it on the table.

“I’m not to read it then?”

Eileen took it up again. She was a little nervous. She would have given all her possessions at that moment to be able to read. She stared hopelessly at the address, half expecting that it would reveal its meaning to her, as if by instinct.

“It’s a man’s hand, Eileen Conran,” said the nun severely.

“Have you been inside it, Sister Maria?”

“No, I have not; but I see that it is a man’s hand.”

“You must have the supernatural vision, then, to be able to say whether it was a man or a woman who wrote it.”

“You foolish girl, when you come to be educated, you will know that men and women are different beings.”

“Sure I’m not so far gone in ignorance as to require a person to come out of a nunnery to tell me that.”

Both of them blushed; Eileen was rather

ashamed of her speech; she added impetuously—

“Take it now, Sister Maria, and read it to me.”

The nun took the epistle, and her crimson flush changed to a slight paleness as she read with breathless eagerness to herself. Eileen waited with expectant face and a keen, scrutinising glance at Sister Maria. The nun looked at her and said,

“It is from the officer. I am doubtful whether I should give you the letter. Eileen, when were you last at confession?”

A look of discomfort blazed upon Eileen’s face; she felt sure that the letter contained something that ought not to have met Sister Maria’s eyes; she looked at the ground, and her voice had almost forsaken her when she announced, “I confessed my sins on Sunday was three weeks.”

“Listen, Eileen Conran—here is one of the things said by Captain Hedley Vicars Jeffery—‘I fear I took advantage of your hospitality.’”

Eileen clasped her hands and her lips moved, but they framed no words.

“Was there no one here when Captain

Jeffery visited you, Eileen Conran? Where was Michael? Unhappy girl! I will send Father O'Mulligan to you."

Eileen's tears fell through her fingers, and with a choking voice, she exclaimed,

"Surely, surely he has something to say to me more than that. That he took advantage of my hospitality. Indeed then, and he ate a great deal of potatoes and herring, and I never grudged them."

"Listen, Eileen Conran,—he says, 'We soldiers, who have to go from country to country, lose sight sometimes of the manners and customs of these islands.' What did he do? Tell me, girl, what did he do?"

"What is it you think he did, Sister Maria?" replied Eileen, straightening herself and folding her arms with a small gesture of defiance. The nun crossed herself.

"It's insultin' me that you are," said Eileen. "The poor young man came in here hungry, and I fed him with what I had in the house, and he was thankful for it. Just read me his letter from the first word to the last. You're frightenin' me, so you are, for no reason on God's earth. And I'm willing to take you to

the Barracks, so I am, and you can ask the captain what he said and what I did."

"I will put the letter into Father O'Mulligan's hands, and he will judge whether it is to the advantage of your soul that you should hear it."

"You will do nothing of the sort. There's many things a girl like me has to do, without thinking of whether it's good or bad for my soul. Perhaps you don't know that we supply the Barracks with all the fish they eat, and that the soldier is maybe saying nothing there that I don't understand. You nuns are just like swallows on a wire—a breath and you are away! Leave the letter, Sister Maria, and I will find someone to read it to me."

"You were very rude to me, Eileen, when Captain Hedley Vicars Jeffery was speaking to me in this very room. Don't you understand that your behaviour is coming back to roost? Now I will read it all."

"I'm sure he's very polite," said Eileen, tremulously; "and it was nothing but a little difference we had about the turbot and the lobsters, as you might have seen, Sister Maria, if you were not always engaged in

looking out for sins in other people. It's the beam perhaps that's in your own eye, if you weren't making so much of other people's motes."

"Eileen, you must remember your mother, and that it's natural we should fear for you something of the same kind, and it is love for you that makes me solicitous. Now I must go into the city and leave you. Think of what I have said about learning to read and write. We are quite content that the Claddagh people should remain without knowledge of books; but your position requires it, and your nature would be corrected by it. You would find the joys of chastisement superior to the earthly raptures in which you indulge. We could set you tasks, Eileen, for your memory, for the chastisement of the intellect is deeper than the pains of the body. And sometimes, perhaps, you might blot out the memory of the incident in your poor mother's life, by joining us and spending your life in fasting and prayer."

And Sister Maria, rolling her eyeballs, went into Galport with a definite prospect of three separate flirtations.

CHAPTER XX.

CHAFFING THE MAGISTRATE.

"BUTLER," said Lord Mountinnes at the County Club, as the magistrate, gaily apparelled in knickerbockers and a pearl-grey suit of tweed, walked into the smoking-room one afternoon.

There were half-a-dozen landowners, whose traps and cars were waiting for them in the square, sitting about the table; some of them unwiring soda-water bottles, others of them either drinking or preparing to drink, smoking or going to smoke.

"Butler," said Lord Mountinnes, "is there any truth in the story about Beatrice?"

"My lord?" inquired Butler, fixing a glass in his left eye and standing with his hand on the bell-pull.

"Thanks, no, Butler, I have some soda and brandy at my elbow. Is that what you mean?"

“Who is Beatrice, my lord?”

The question was received by a noisy outburst of laughter, and the magistrate was glad to turn to the attendants and order his drink, without insisting upon his dignity.

When the laughter had subsided he observed quietly, while he screwed his face into a contortion as he withdrew a cork from a bottle,

“If the story is that I am going to marry Mrs. Lynch, then it’s true enough.”

The laughter gave way to an interchange of serious and discomfited glances. No one doubted that the magistrate had made a perfectly correct announcement of fact. The long battle was at an end, then. There was to be no more study of the arts of bombardment and fortification and exercise of them on the heart of the occupant of Tasmania.

She had* pulled down her colours and given in. It was disappointing news to every occupant of the room. The captain of the gun-boat opened the door and came in at that moment.

“Thorburn, what would you say was the most improbable piece of news about—er—Bea—er—Mrs. Lynch of Tasmania?”

"That she was going to marry Butler," said the captain, judging from the unwonted dignity of the magistrate's bearing that he was being chaffed. He had heard the rumour on his way over to the Club. He was looking forward himself to becoming one of Beatrice's suitors.

"If it were true," continued his lordship, "I should say it was a shame. Er—Beatrice is still in her girlhood, and it's justice that she should marry a young fellow this time. Two old fellows, one after another—I don't believe it, Butler. She has a large selection—and, pardon me, not one of us but possesses a better claim to her than you. I don't believe it, Butler. I don't indeed."

The magistrate relaxed his dignity, and with a smile of triumph remarked,

"Well, Mountinnes, if it pleases your vanity to think that Mrs. Lynch may engage herself to you or any of the discomfited remainder, I have nothing more to say. In the meantime, as you are an old—I might with propriety say aged—friend, how would you mind acting as groomsman?"

"Er—Butler, you know that I can't afford to

make marriage presents. Find someone else. Here is De Burgh, with all his hanging-gales settled—ask him. He has a banker. I have not.”

“Tell us all about it, Butler,” said a rosy giant, stirring in his chair and thrusting a purple countenance through a cloud of smoke; “if there’s any truth in it I pronounce it all a miracle. You recollect that occasion, Butler, when you tried to put yourself on an even footing with what you call the discomfited remainder—when you plucked up courage to invest in a hunter and to bring him into the field at Loughan? And when the hunter—sagacious rascal—deposited you, the Lord alone knows where, and kept in the rear of the hounds for a couple of hours all by himself? You don’t tell me that the Beatrice Lynch, who nearly died of laughter every time she saw the noble animal come up without a rider, and when she called across the field ‘Butler’s ghost,’ till we nearly all forgot there was a fox—would change her views so quickly. She’s the very woman who would never forgive a man for being ridiculous; and I appeal to the discomfited remainder to say, if

on that occasion the majesty of the law, deposited in a turf-pool while its horse kept up the hunt on its own account, was not slightly compromised."

"De Burgh, you're putting in the colours too strong. I always said that if you had gone to the Four Courts you would have been the crack pleader of the day. The majesty of the law is so sure of itself, however, that it can afford to keep an impassive countenance while you caricature it. On that occasion Beatrice—I mean Mrs. Lynch—and, perhaps, considering the terms on which I now am with the lady, the Beatrice had better drop out of our conversation—was so concerned that she sent a fellow down every day for a week to make sure there were no bones broken."

"Er—a most important point, Butler, if you are really going to marry her, that you should have no—er—bones broken," observed Lord Mountinnes, passing his fingers through his beard. "But—er—if you will excuse me for saying it, Butler—er—until I shall have heard from Beatrice's own lips that you are going to marry her, I shall—er—be sceptical."

"Call me a—?"

“No, I shan’t. But er—she’s mad enough for anything, and——”

“We’d better change the subject,” said the magistrate, showing an unmistakable irritation.

There was a brief pause, during which two men added a little spirits to their soda water, De Burgh smoked furiously, and Lord Mountinnes looked at the magistrate’s eye-glass.

“When poor Jack Lynch was setting out for Madeira,” resumed De Burgh, his large, massive, rubicund face emerging again from the cloud of his own creating, “he took me aside one day—the last time I ever saw him in Dublin—and said, ‘De Burgh, some of your land marches with mine,—and I have a sort of premonitory symptom’—putting his hand over his left lung—‘that something that ought to go on inside here, means to stop, and Beatrice will be a widow——’”

“I don’t like this sort of thing,” said Butler, uneasily.

“‘Will be a widow,’” continued De Burgh, ignoring him, “‘and if that should come about, I will trust to you doing anything you can for Morris and her, in the way of neighbourly

offices. You know my belief—fad, I call it—that everybody who has land in Ireland ought to give, at least half a life, to seeing it made productive for themselves and the tenantry.' Poor Jack! He didn't spend ten months in the country after he came of age; but he was a patriotic sort of fellow in theory. 'And I don't mind telling you,' he said, 'that Beatrice will be obliged to live in Ireland, if this bit of machinery inside my chest stops working, for six months out of every year. She'll be popular with the tenantry, and make it easy for Morris to come on when he is of age.' I give you his very words, Butler; you needn't glare at me like that. And I call all of you—the discomfited remainder—to witness, if as a neighbour I have not done everything——"

"To induce her to become Beatrice De Burgh," interrupted the magistrate.

"Well, I don't deny," said De Burgh, thumping a massive calf of a leg, "that as far as my habits would allow, I made myself very agreeable to the girl. When that poor captain was shot I don't deny that I called as often as I could make an excuse for doing it."

"Did you take an interest in the brat?"

Cool of Lynch to tell off a girl like Beatrice to warm the property for him during the best days of her life," interposed a hitherto silent loungee.

"She's an excellent mother," went on De Burgh.

"Colt," interrupted Lord Mountinnes to Sir T. Colthurst, who slouched in from the barracks with a cigar, "what should you say was the most improbable thing in the world?"

"That the —th was ordered to England," drawled Colt.

"Try again."

"Give me a cue."

Lord Mountinnes nodded at the magistrate. "Improbable thing in the world? That Butler will ever learn to ride. A soda-water bottle—yes, by all means. What's this? De Burgh, you look excited. The most improbable thing in the world, and it's about Butler? Give it up. Thanks, I shall sit on the end of the table. I've got an extensive I.O.U. here, and I'm waiting for my victim. It was reported to me that his car was seen about the square. Gad! there's Beatrice Lynch, loveliest of women—look how she sits her horse. Beatrice, my

soul's delight, it strikes me you have a shrewd idea that the Admiration Club is having a sitting."

The room rose and adjourned to the window, and the nodding of the fogies was answered by a smile which shot into the window like a ray of sunlight.

"Hang that magistrate!" exclaimed Thorburn; "there he is, picking his steps to the horse's head. Beatrice doesn't see him though. No—not observed. Three cheers for the widow!"

"Not so loud, captain, if you please," remarked the susceptible De Burgh, who loomed head and shoulders above the others, and flattered himself that the signals of attachment he was making beneath his eye-lids were well understood by Mrs. Lynch.

But the widow had fallen into conversation with a little crowd of fisherwomen, who were holding up baskets, one above another, and importuning her. The magistrate had gallantly, if a little sheepishly, taken his stand at her horse's head.

"What does the old idiot think he is doing?" asked Sir T. Colthurst. "Does he

stand there as a magistrate or as a man? Is he posing for law or for love? Of course, out comes Beatrice's purse. Mountinnes, wouldn't you like to have it? Hang the widow! She is giving half-crowns to that crowd, as if they were to be picked up on the beach. Look at the poor magistrate; he don't half like it. I believe she's doing it to spite him."

The widow looked the picture of beautiful beneficence, in her riding-habit, seated firmly on her horse, whose head was as haughtily averted from Mr. Butler's as his mistress's. The spirits of the club-room rose simultaneously. They saw that the magistrate, in spite of his recent boast, was ignored. He was looking extremely uncomfortable in his knickerbockers; especially as he had made several efforts to attract Beatrice's attention, to which she did not respond.

"Now the purse is empty, and Beatrice is coming down. Go out and hold that stirrup"—and an attendant went out. "Gad! that's the cleverest thing I ever saw. She hasn't as much as looked at Butler. She's coming in."

"To see me," "me," "me." "We shall soon see," and the group crowded out to the

club-door, while the widow ascended the steps and, whip in hand, looked back on the street, not at Mr. Butler.

The crush of faces at the door should have been overpowering.

"I have not come to see any of you," said Mrs. Lynch, gaily, looking into one and another's face, with laughter in her own.

"I came to see if I could get the day before the day before yesterday's *Times*."

"Any amount of them," said Lord Mountinnes, vanishing, followed by Sir T. Colthurst, to hunt for the newspapers; the older men waited and improved the shining hour.

"Mr. De Burgh, I shall have an action for trespass against you, and Mr. Butler shall try it. About fifty of your buffaloes wandered round to my lawn, and were there when I left, feeding on geraniums and roses."

"The deuce they were! I shall call to-night and see what damage they have done," said the giant.

"You have not redeemed your promise, Mrs. Lynch, of coming out to see the gun-boat. When shall we expect you?" asked the captain tenderly.

“There’s water-way all up to Tasmania, Thorburn,” remarked De Burgh; “go up and anchor.”

“I am so poor a seaman,” pleaded the widow. Lord Mountinnes came back with fifty copies of the *Times*; Sir T. Colthurst followed with a pile fully larger.

“You silly men, do you suppose I want all these? I only wish to look for a birth in the day before the day before yesterday’s newspaper.”

“A birth! whose is it?”

“You will send me the day before the day before yesterday’s *Times*,” said the widow to an attendant; and escaping into the street she was followed by the crowd to her horse’s side. She did not know who helped her to ascend. But as she galloped out of the square, the magistrate stood with a serious face; and the club stood in various attitudes laughing at him.

END OF VOL. I.

THE RED ROUTE

OR

SAVING A NATION

THE RED ROUTE

OR

Saving a Nation

BY

WILLIAM SIME

AUTHOR OF "KING CAPITAL," "TO AND FRO," ETC.

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CHAPTER I.

THE ANNOYANCE COMMITTEE.

FINN had a sharp passage of arms, after he returned to Galport, with the little commercial traveller who represented the great Mystery in the West. A good deal of money had been sent in to No XII., and the secretary, though he accounted for much of it, had to confess to a full meeting of the Brotherhood that on one occasion he parted with six or seven pounds, upon impulse, to stay an eviction at Loughan. The traveller, who spoke with a slight American accent, was very definite and incisive in his criticism of the transaction. He made a statesmanlike statement to the Brotherhood, in which he demonstrated that all money payments made to No. XII. were, in reality, made to the great Mystery. They were not for ex-

penditure on the spot, except through the medium of the great Mystery. Why, hang it! suggested the little traveller, if the subscriptions were to be paid away to the boys about Loughan who might happen to be turned adrift by their agent, there would be no end to the demands upon the funds. They might as well collect for the parish priests, or for the workhouses, as for indiscriminate charity on the road, whereas No. XII. was an executive branch of a war department. If, instead of paying the Scotch agent, Finn had pistolled him, the little traveller would have understood it. It would have been a cheap and effectual way of getting his friends into their houses again. For the future, he continued, he had been deputed by the Head Centre in Dublin to collect all the money which was brought in, and he hoped that Mr. O'Brien would consider himself bound to make good the little deficiency. For, after all, the Brotherhood had only his word for it that the money was spent as he said it was. Certainly he was a great buck to look at, with his military cut of coat, and his generally expensive appearance.

The meeting was not inclined to approve of

all the traveller said. They knew, most of them, how the money had gone, and though they would have preferred that it had been invested in gunpowder, and the gunpowder laid in a train beneath a county court or a gaol, they met the accusations with a slight murmur.

“You miserable little toad!” said Finn, his eyes flashing and his face blazing with indignation. “Is it me you are accusing of putting the patriotic fund to a bad use? Come outside the shebeen and measure your paces, and I’ll riddle your cursed body with shot and throw you to the crows after—odious stinkard that you are!”

But the little traveller kept quite cool, remarking that the Mystery meant him to convey what funds they had to Dublin, and if this young brother found any means of restoring what he had so injudiciously parted with, he for one should be quite pleased.

The meeting was being held in Finn’s own room, so he burst out of it to the bar and demanded ten pounds from his aunt.

“Ten pounds is it, Finn O’Brien?” asked his aunt, who was in a room off the shebeen. “You might just as well ask me for ten millions o’

pounds. But, if it's quite necessary, and your excitement looks like it, here's three and something over. And God save Ireland."

The lad carried his cash back and flung it into a hat. "Take this for an instalment, Mr. Toad, and abandon your filthy charge."

The traveller abandoned it, but conveyed the money to a safe place inside a greasy pocket-book, while King Conran, who, as usual, presided, found it necessary to say that they would never gain their ends if they did not agree, that they must keep their pistols for others and not talk of using them on themselves, with much to the same effect. After which harmony was restored, and later on even Finn's good-humour, as it was announced, on the authority of the Great Mystery, that the work undertaken by the Annoyance Committee was on a most effective scale.

"Are you aware why the president of the College of Galport has resigned his post?" asked the traveller. "No, you are not aware, but we in Dublin are; he was seized with a fit of apoplexy on the perusal of a threat made and prepared I believe by the committee over which my fiery but trustworthy friend O'Brien

presides. If that's not achieving by fear and effective means the gradual clearance of an alien race from the institutions of Ireland—well, I don't know what is. Go on with your Annoyance Committee, O'Brien. The eyes of the Dublin patriots are fixed on you. You are well known to them. And if I spoke a little in the heat of the moment, it was because I know every ounce of powder that is bought and every shining bullet that is moulded in the cause, and I desire no useless waste."

* * * * *

"What has come over Jones now, I wonder?" asked Finn O'Brien one evening, when darkness had settled down upon the river, and he stood at the corner of a roofless mill with half-a-dozen companions. "If that's not him in the distance," said one of the group, "it's very curious. Ye see he's takin' the lights before him—one after another, out they go. I'll go back and meet him and extinguish as I advance." The Annoyance Committee was presently completed, and wandering aside from the river it passed over the threshold of an hotel consecrated by use

and went to mariners, but with a parlour always open to those who cared to pay for it by a little orgie. The landlady, adorned with a formidable weight of yellow earrings, received them in the low hall of the house and saw to it that they had pipes of suitable length and spittoons of adequate depth, and a fire of an inviting heat in the grate. For the rest of the evening they were attended by a wild girl with large eyes, who winked at them wickedly as she was addressed in an affectionate or a churlish manner. One manner seemed as acceptable to her as another.

The Committee was not a very large one that night, but there was annoying power in it to serve a much more populous centre of Irish discontent than Galport. There were no more than seven of them, three of whom were squireens who were glad to be in a parlour where whiskey was circulating, under any pretext, one of whom was the son of the beadle of the Protestant Cathedral, another the offspring of a pawnbroker, another an Englishman, another Finn O'Brien.

They were all members of the Galport College, with the intention ultimately of

figuring in the world as squires, lawyers, or doctors.

Finn took the chair—it was one of about twenty in the room—on the right side of the sea-coal fire, and with a countenance burnished with joviality remarked that “the Cabinet Council was snug and warm against the spring winds roaring at the mouth of the river at any rate. Let it to business.” The wild-eyed girl had already set glasses for them and pulled out a bottle of local whiskey, warranted to be five years old; glasses were all charged, sugared, watered; the composition was already tasted, and with the first genial warmth rippling towards their stomachs they were ready for laughter or anything. “Now before we proceed to business,” said Finn, “let me tell you that our efforts have been blessed—the president of the college has had an attack of apoplexy in Dublin, and he took it at the sight of one of your sketches, Jones.”

“Which one?” in modesty asked Jones, bringing a portfolio from his breast pocket and selecting about a dozen lugubrious designs of his own making, which were to be sent to obnoxious members of the community.

“The one that represented him hanging from the tree in the quadrangle, with the vultures of science and theology picking his flesh, while ten or twelve students with masks and spades were engaged upon a pit for the reception of his bones. It was a picture conceived in the finest tragic spirit. I can assure ye, Jones, that though you are an Englishman, you have done yeoman’s service to the Irish cause.”

“Which I suppose is this,” said Jones, making his glass cannikin clink on the table, the contents of which, replenished as often as he liked on this occasion, being the payment he received for his artistic conception.

“Have you embodied the conception agreed upon at our last meeting for the benefit of the mayor?” asked Finn, surveying a large cardboard with black edges, in the centre of which was a tombstone, adorned with one red worm, whose head was distinguishable as that of the Protestant bishop. “This is very symbolic, and will give the bishop a bad half-hour—ill luck to him! It will suggest some considerations to him with regard to the instability of life. Jones, you are throwing away a fine artist upon the trade of medicine.”

“The mayor has earned a sketch more harassing than any in the collection,” suggested a squireen, who showed spurs on his boots as he advanced to the fire-place to insert the head of his pipe in a white flame. “He has been behaving in a characteristically disgraceful way. Begging Jones’s pardon, but he might just as well be a sanguinary Englishman. Think of him fining five of us for an innocent attack upon his own shopman with the snow, during the winter.”

“It’s a masterpiece,” said Finn, looking carefully into the sketch which was meant for the mayor. There was a tradition in Galport that a mayor in the olden time, out of the righteousness of his disposition, had hanged his own son with his own hands because he had behaved shamefully to a Spanish ward. Jones used the tradition so far as to make the mayor’s son behead his father on a scaffold. The instrument of decapitation was a scoop, a covert allusion to one of the tools of his profession. The College of Galport, symbolised by a figure clad like Portia, looked on with a complaisant smile; the mayor’s wife, with a pipe in her cheek, wheeled a coffin into posi-

tion and was cheered by a crowd of townspeople.

"Yes," said Finn slowly, "it's a masterpiece; for it gathers up, as it were, the past of the city, and, with one glorious, satirical application of it, it annihilates the miserable cur. If he doesn't shake in his shoes for some time to come, I don't know what will ever make him shiver there. But these university sketches are not without merit either."

It was true enough, they were not without merit. Thus Professor Dacy was undergoing an operation, which, while it inflicted upon him the maximum of torture, was depriving him of his tongue. The Professor of Greek was dangling as a skeleton in the museum hall, and an obese philosopher, who examined for university degrees, was represented as a collection of intestines, blown and dried for demonstration. In each case, however, the theme was the same—either death or the prospect of death, torture or pain. Not that Mr. Jones would not gladly have exerted himself on more cheerful themes; for his own satisfaction he often drew scenes of the most cheerful description. He found, however, that the applause of his

friends was especially retained for the manifestation of knives, coffins, blunderbusses, graves, spades, bones, and stones ; to these subjects, therefore, he applied himself with the greatest zeal. But the genius of the Annoyance Committee was not all represented by Mr. Jones. One of the squireens—Mr. O'Donoghue—had a fine gift of disguised handwriting, and another had a terse and incisive style in the way of dictating threats. Having carefully composed and agreed upon a score of these, the Committee broke up, singing “The Rakes of Mallow,” and beating their way home with their sticks.

CHAPTER II.

THE TASMANIA BROOK.

CAPTAIN JEFFERY, being rebuked by his colonel, recovered his temper and his lost expression of ease and gaiety. It came back to him in the course of a couple of days' arguing with himself; before a fortnight elapsed he had quite recovered it, having convinced himself, at the end of that period, that he had banished Eileen from his memory. He found great assistance in riding about the neighbourhood, directing the operations of an imaginary army against an imaginary enemy, and defeating the latter at the point of the bayonet at various places between the city and the horizon. It was on one of these triumphant occasions, and when he was riding over the Tasmania roads, calculating diligently at what rate his imaginary division with all its impediments could advance upon the beach, that a

shoe slackened on his horse's hoof. One of his accomplishments was shoeing a horse; he came down, therefore, to look at the hoof; but his horse, surprised by the descent and suddenly liberated at the head, set off across the fields as hard as he could gallop. As the captain looked at him surmounting gates and ditches, he felt it was all over with him. He made certain that he would drive a nail into the quick; and it was with the certainty of finding him ruined for use, that he followed after as fast as he could carry himself over the same walls, hedges, and gates.

He had been fully half an hour in pursuit; the country was green and lumpy, and as soon as he had got to the top of one knoll, "Paddy" was showing his heels over the summit of another. There was a mud-cabin here and there, built like a swallow's nest in the warm corners of the knolls, and at the doors, when the galloping horse had passed, there was a girl in a magenta petticoat, or a boy with half a pair of drawers shouting.

"Curse the brute! Whose place is this?" asked Jeffery at one of the cabin doors.

"It's Squire De Burgh's, your honour. Is

it catch your horse for you I will, your honour? Sure an' he's off the squire's land now and on to the widdy's. It's the fine grass in the widdy's policies that'll bring him to a stand-still, your honour. And I'll not catch him for you? Very well. Ah, ye barracks puppy, bad luck to ye! And it's you that'll never be the soldier."

Jeffery found that the Lynch park was indeed a great improvement upon the De Burgh ridges. As he passed through a plantation of trees in full leaf he set up a woodcock; rabbits played about the green undergrowth and hardly moved at his advance; there were squirrels in the branches. But no horse to be seen.

"Curse the brute!" continued the soldier, emerging upon a wide expanse of softest herbage, from the brow of which he could see the ocean, blue and tranquil in the distance, and some of the city's smoke curling from a neighbouring valley. He walked down the open space to where the ground dipped into a stream.

"The duffer may be having a drink now," he reflected, as the flash of a descending

stream caught his eye. The park was well wooded; he lost sight of the stream again as he went down. Then it reappeared, and, strangest of spectacles, there was "Paddy," with his head inclining towards the stream, and one of his hind legs under the arm of a girl, who was belabouring the loose shoe with the sole of her own brogue.

Jeffery held his breath. "Paddy" was the trickiest of animals. If he detected his master's footsteps behind him he would kick with the liveliest ingratitude, and in that event his reckless blacksmith might trust to have a stunning blow. The crack of the brogue sounded through the little vale, and it was evident to Jeffery that the girl was getting the work done in a perfectly scientific way.

As he stood overlooking the scene, however, his heart gave a great palpitation of surprise. The stooping figure who was delivering the blows was Eileen Conran, unconscious of being overlooked, unaware of the trickery of the great brute whose hoof she held so lovingly. What to do Jeffery could not think. He could only leap aside and stand out of sight, as "Paddy" with trembling

nostrils looked back. If he were seen, nothing he knew would hinder the horse from plunging into the stream, having shaken himself from off the girl. He must simply wait where he was behind the tree till the beating ceased and the girl was out of danger.

"Sure now," went on Eileen, delivering her blows with deftness and precision, "and it's a long run you've had, darlin', all by yourself. Yes, and it's a pretty one you are, a pretty beautiful one you are, with your eyes like the sloes, and a gentle one too. 'Deed, dear, and it's invitin' me to get up on your back you are and to ride away. It's not the widdy's horse you can be either. Say, darlin', what have you done with your rider? An' have ye hurt your poor feet?"

"Paddy" evidently appreciated the soft words which were addressed to him. When Eileen, having fairly shod him again, put down his foot, he lifted a fore-foot as if inviting her to proceed with her work.

"Well, then, and it's not another nail ye have in your poor feet, is it, my beauty? just let me look. Head up now, head up, my beauty; no, that foot is all right. And so is

the other one. It's followin' me is it you are? And you're grateful to me! Ay, would ye now? Ye would like to rub your head on me, would ye? What have ye done with your master? Have ye thrown him? And can ye find your own way home?"

The horse was stooping his head, and the girl drew her fingers between his eyes. He liked it, and when she had done, he lifted his head and whinnied.

"Oh, but it's blowin' your trumpet loud you are. And what in the world am I to do with you? You can't come to the Claddagh with me. Horsey, dear, just try and find your way home and leave me alone to myself where you found me."

At that moment a figure glided out from the trees, and Captain Jeffery, by a swift movement, had hold of his horse's bridle. Paddy reared. Eileen stepped back surprised; for a moment the three stood looking at each other, the horse not certain that he would not be roughly handled, the girl slightly alarmed to find that the captain was the master about whom she had been speculating.

"You don't seem to know," said Jeffery,

"that you have made a narrow escape of being kicked to death; you have fastened a shoe on the most cantankerous brute in the West of Ireland." Paddy blew through his nostrils and dropped a mouthful of foam upon the sward. His master led him to a tree, and tied him up the length of his belt and bridle to a low branch.

"Dear me the day! it's Captain Jeffery, it is," said Eileen, behind him, and the captain, leaving Paddy to graze, sauntered out on the bank of the stream. He was hot and tired after his long pursuit. He was a little vexed to find that at last it had led him to Eileen. He had convinced himself that, till his regiment left Galport, it would be better for him never to see the girl again. And here were all his resolutions brought to nothing by a brute of a horse. Eileen had been wading in the brook evidently. She had neither shoes nor stockings on; her brogues had been used as hammers, as he had seen. Hang the girl! Why had she so much pluck and simplicity,—pluck to shoe a kicking horse, simplicity to stand there in the sun with her white bare legs, as if nothing were the matter.

“ Well, then, and it’s the beast that I like,” said Eileen, gazing at Paddy, “ and it’s not me that would be likely to be kicked to death when I was saving him from pain. I was just wadin’ in the stream, watchin’ the brown water go by, when he came on me all of a sudden, and held up his foot. Poor thing, then ! and there was no danger whatever.”

Captain Jeffery threw himself down on the bank, a bank of mixed moss, sward, and blue and yellow flowers. He took off his cap and, bringing out his handkerchief, wiped his brow, and clasping his knees looked into the brook, which was flowing past with the most musical gurgle in the world. Eileen, a little way off, under the shade of an elm tree, looked from him to his horse, wondering that he should have forgotten her, as his dreamy look and silent demeanour seemed to indicate.

He sat there staring into the opposite bank, where a coot was trying to conceal her movements among a growth of sword-rushes, and it was only when a hot sunbeam had drawn the perspiration on his brow that he began to think of the girl and his horse. She had not spoken. The horse was quietly chewing some

grass. He stooped at the edge of the water, and chased a wren from her nest as he did so, to moisten his handkerchief. He cooled his face and brow with it; he cooled his wrists, and rose. Eileen, arms akimbo, was looking into the water a little way down the bank. He slouched down towards her, and standing by her said,

“You are very brave, and very pure, and very clever, Eileen. I hope you forgave me for the proposal I made to you in ignorance of your nature, that unfortunate night of the storm.”

“Oh, Captain Jeffery, I had your letter, and I thought it was beautiful. Sister Maria read it to me, and, truly, it was worth a girl’s while to be insulted to get such a beautiful letter. Do they feed you at the barracks, Captain Jeffery dear? ye were so complimentary to the poor potatoes, and the fish, and the whiskey? But Sister Maria was shocked—ye understand I can’t read.”

“Let us sit down on the bank and talk it over,” said the captain.

Eileen sat down and put her feet in the running stream. Presently a shoal of parr swam round them, and in a subdued voice

she pointed them out that they might not be frightened away.

"Child of nature," murmured the captain. "Where should I begin?" said Jeffery, heaving a desperate sigh.

Eileen plunged her feet, the shoal darted off like lightning, and looking with her great black eyes full into his face, asked, "Begin where? Was there anything you would like to say to me?"

"That we must part," said the captain, putting his arm round her waist, and kissing her till she pushed him from her.

"Now then, and it's what man nor boy ever offered to do to me in my life before," said the girl, standing in the stream with flashing eyes, and looking at him.

"How could I help it?" asked the captain. "I come down here after a tiger or a horse, and I find you shoeing him; you sit down on the bank beside me, though you know I'm as bad as I can be, taking for granted that I'm a good young man. Eileen, let me help you out of that stream. It's pretty, but it's dangerous. You might go home and die of fever. And I should go mad."

She smiled and gave him her hand, and he helped her on to the bank. They walked away from Paddy, beneath the pleasant shade of the trees, and the rich softness of the grass. There was no sound below but the steady ripple of the brook over its grey stones; none above save the high carol of the unseen lark and the rapid, business-like, mellow notes from a blackbird startled out of the undergrowth; the wren had got back to her nest, too, and her mate was issuing a shrill note of triumph on the opposite bank.

He put his hand in her arm because she was stepping out with a long dignified pace of her own, longer than the military pace, unusual in a girl. They were getting out of sight and Paddy whinnied. They involuntarily turned, and walked between the trees to where he was attached, and that outer edge of greenery where they were on the point of disappearing from each other's sight.

"It's a strange meeting, Captain, and it is."

"How did you come to be here?"

"Well then, and the brook flows past my door, and I'm sometimes tempted, just for the

music of it, to follow it high up. Whenever I'm wishful to hear the singing I come up. It's not often that I have the time; but when I have I like to get away from everything but the blue above and the singing below—then I fall asleep and think I'm in heaven, and purgatory all out of it."

"Would you believe me, girl, if I said that I loved you?"

"No."

"But I do."

"You may spare your pains, Captain Jeffery. I'm engaged. I have a spouse already. A great, strong, beautiful lover, and you, and your like, you are all his enemies."

"I hate him!"

"I know you do. You all hate Ireland. You are here, with your foot on the sweet green grass, and you are full of Ireland's music and your eye blue with Ireland's skies, and you hate Ireland. And that's my lover. And Ireland's bound with chains. And you are one of them who forge the links. Poor man! to speak to me who am the bride of my country, who have Ireland for my lover!"

"Eileen, this is furious fustian to talk to

a fellow who would kiss you if you would let him.”

“No, no, no, Captain Jeffery! You surely understand me now. I pretend to no great things. I am not a princess if they call me one at the Claddagh. But if it's a true heart to Ireland there is, it beats here.”

“You are an enthusiast. I don't mind that so long as you are the prettiest girl in the West. Now, Eileen, tell me, are you the daughter of a nun?”

“Yes, and I sometimes think of wearing the veil. But I've been kissed by a Saxon, and it would ill become me to wear what requires piety and purity to justify it.”

“Nunnery be hanged! I'll tell you what. If you'll become my wife and blot out all the speeches I've made to you that are unworthy of you, I shall marry you offhand. I shall do as they do at the Claddagh, I'll run away with you if you prefer it.”

“Sure then, and the poor horse came and offered me his back. And what if heaven meant you and me to be one and the same? Will you give me time to think it over? And will you shake hands with me now, and know

that, if I refuse you, I have forgiven you for mistakin' me, and that I don't think badly of you? Good bye, Captain, sir."

And Eileen disappeared down the bank of the stream, while Jeffery returned slowly to mount his restive horse.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. LYNCH.

MRS. Lynch was a little dissatisfied with her summer in London. The enforced residence in Ireland had produced an unexpected result, it had begun to attach her to her Irish home. Her income did not permit her to appear in Mayfair in any great splendour; a small fashionable house in Clarges Street and a small fashionable villa on the river, at no great distance from Cookham, rather scattered her resources, already broken up by three incomes due to relatives of the late major whom she had never seen and had no desire to see. Her three estates did not yield more than as many thousand pounds—an income which was princely on the estate of Tasmania, but which, when it was divided down, as the dead hand of the major directed, fell short of the demands made upon it during the London

season. And, curiously enough, Mrs. Lynch had begun to consider a question presented to her in one of her conversations with her son's tutor.

As he had represented it to her, it was a base misuse of Irish money to gather it up from poor peasants and take it to London to spend. To be sure, her son's tutor was not much of an authority, if Mr. Butler was to be believed. Yet she remembered his sayings on the subject, and more than once it seemed to her, as her brougham swelled the crush at Hyde Park Corner, and as she acknowledged the friendly greetings of the Irish-supported carriages, that perhaps it really was a little hard on the poor people housed in the swallows' nests and damp bee-hives of Clare and Connemara. Yet it is hard to say whether she was more impressed by the realization of the fact, than by the recollection that it was the enthusiastic and winning tongue of her son's tutor which had presented it to her mind.

It happened just at this time, too, that Ireland was being much discussed in London.

The Nationalist party in Parliament were more than usually uncompromising, under the

leadership of a stout, red-faced little man, with thick lips and an odour of rum about him, who made St. Stephen's ring with demands for the disestablishment of an alien Church, for the introduction of a Land Act which should give the Irish peasant a chance of life, and for the execution of a repeal which should make Ireland free to attend to her own business in a Dublin parliament. There was a great deal of talk in society and in the press about the duty landowners owed to those who created the profits by which their incomes were made. And Mrs. Lynch, so far as she could understand the discussion, was a little prejudiced in favour of the tenantry, not acknowledging to herself that what she was prejudiced in favour of was Finn O'Brien's pleading for them.

She was rather dissatisfied with London, because it was becoming a more serious place for her than it used to be. In the major's time her house in Clarges Street was a lively and a happy establishment. It was not nearly so large as the crush of people who came to see them made it desirable that it should be. And there had been some talk of selling the

Cookham villa and putting the money into a London house on a greater scale; but it had never been done, and the major's death put all such schemes out of the question. *Bijou* as it was, however, it was large enough for the widow's requirements this summer. For she was in a peculiar position. She could not use it for any definite recognisable purpose. If Morris had been older she might have made it the centre of some important gatherings on his account. She would have had his college friends to meet him, and their sisters and cousins to meet them. They would dance and "spoon," and consider the ultimate necessity of marriage. As yet, however, Morris was nothing, a mere infant, and, since that unhappy moment when he pulled the trigger in the park of Tasmania, an infant to be regarded with serious attention, and not to be too rashly introduced to others. Nor could she seriously use it for herself, since, if she had wanted to marry, that was now out of the question, as by every post long letters from Mr. Butler, Magistrate, Galport, assured her in the most affectionate terms. He was coming over to London for a month in the autumn after

everybody was out of town, and when, for the first time since he had read law at the Temple, he promised himself he would see in and round about the great city of the world. Mrs. Lynch read his letters for some days, and remembered painfully that she had given her word to become his wife. Out yonder, among the moors and the chit-chat of a small township like Galport, he had seemed to her as good as any other man. He was certainly not happy in the art of sighing and paying compliments, but he knew a great deal of law, and law was wanted to get in the rents. Besides, he had a power of affectionate generalisation about him which recommended him as a guardian for Morris. He was fatherly, and Mrs. Lynch, who had lost her father, a half-pay officer in Chatham, when she was four, and her mother when she was ten, appreciated fatherliness more than anything in the demeanour of men ; she did not know why, but so it was. His letters came in torrents, and percolated through her waste paper basket, with letters from Clare about St. Columbkil, and from Lough Head about her land there.

She had no love for Mr. Butler ; she never

thought of marriage in the present tense ; she answered him, as if there were a tacit understanding on the subject, but without reciprocating his phrases of affection and without saying that, in the event of his coming to London, she would be glad to see him. She had indeed a half-formed intention, if he came, of being somewhere else.

There was thus a good deal of cause for discontent in her lot. She was now twenty-seven years of age, in the full flower of her womanhood. She required no retinue of flatterers to tell her that she was handsome beyond the fortune of most women. She had only to let herself out and in her dresses, between her mirrors, and to overhear her maid's murmurs of approval, to know that for cool stateliness of figure, frank audacity of face, and freshness of youth she had hardly an equal in Mayfair. Virgins of one or two years' standing there were many, who excelled her in artlessness and unsurpassed sweetness of expression. She knew a little life, and her strong blue eyes did not altogether conceal the fact ; but the knowledge did not assume the garb of boldness or cynicism. She thought

she knew men thoroughly, and believed them to be all more or less silly. That was the side of their nature they had chosen to reveal to her for the most part. Her outlook on the world, therefore, was rather one of amused and affectionate good-humour. When she was dancing, as she occasionally liked to dance, men stood in a group and looked at her circling figure, and in her mobile face read a story of sweetness and strength. Though she was suspected of being engaged, and known to be a widow who was not to be married, she had on these occasions always a crowd pressing for dances. Very young men and very old men were equally enthusiastic about her. Middle-aged men as a rule thought she was too knowing, and that she concealed her disposition under an affectation of laughter.

How to make Clarges Street less severe? She could not do it on her son's account. She could not do it on her own. She would like to have opened her drawing-rooms to dancing parties and to have been gay, and to take her part in the great fair of matrimony. Not that she felt wildly in love with the restraint of married life. She hated restraint,

and she loved mastery. But she needed companionship. And the poor, attentive, old magistrate out in the West of Ireland rather appalled her by his steadfastness. On the other hand, she was not overpowered by the civilised expressions of admiration by the men who surrounded her and stooped over her, and put their eyes out of joint that they might catch a laughing glance of her eyes. She felt that between the freshness and spontaneousness of expression in some of her friends in the far West, and the deep, subtle meanings of her friends of the drawing-rooms, there was a wide difference in favour of the former. She looked in vain for that simplicity of affectionate admiration offered her* by her son's tutor. She listened in vain for the fanciful turns of expression, the quaintnesses, the mirthful mistakes made by him in the struggle to be conventional, and the necessity to show that he loved her.

It made her a little home-sick for Tasmania. And she determined to cut short her visit to England by at least three months, explaining it to herself by her obedience to the major's injunctions, and to her wish to discharge the

duties of her position, as all the propagandists of the hour were saying that landowners in Ireland ought to discharge them.

About Morris she had begun to lose the anxiety which had given her so many sad hours at Galport. The child was as precocious as ever; but he had almost forgotten the incident in connection with Captain Owen. Having bragged of it once or twice, he had been laughed at by those who heard him.

“You shoot a captain of the — th. Oh!” said a tall Member of Parliament to whom the boy had once entrusted the secret in Clarges Street. “Shoot him with the cork of a soda-water bottle, eh?” He was only laughed at, and when he found he was not believed he ceased telling the story. And his mother lost her anxiety about him to a certain extent, though she had a deep fear of the direction in which his nature might develop itself. It was when she thought most anxiously of her son that she remembered the magistrate most kindly. He was skilled in the law and would protect her son from danger, should a time ever come when the incident was likely to bring him into trouble.

In the meantime, however, it was a relief to her to think of marriage only as a state to be postponed. And the channel of her affection worked in the direction of Finn O'Brien, because she thought—and with perfect sincerity—that he never would be anything more to her than her son's tutor. She got so many letters that she kept none of them longer than they required to be answered, but the following was a letter which she sometimes took out of her desk to smile at. It was Finn's answer to her gift of the portraits. It ran :

BALLYBUNION,

April —.

MY DEAR MADAM, You could not have conferred upon me a greater distinction than you have done, by putting me in possession of the portraits of yourself and your son. Rest assured that the delicate attention you have thus paid me is appreciated from the innermost fibre of my heart. As long as that heart continues to beat in my bosom it will throb with affection for Beatrice Lynch and her son. Pardon me on this occasion for using that name in its virgin simplicity ; but I feel that I am, for once, justified in forgetting that you are, madam, my employer, in realising the circumstance that you have revealed yourself as my dear friend and benefactor. If I were to unravel to you one-tenth portion of the emotions by which I am

swayed, as I turn my eyes from the contemplation of your immaculate sweetness and saintly serenity to the innocent quaintness of your son, you would require to make a larger draught on your kind credulity than I dare to ask you to make. Let me say, however, with all the emphasis which I can summon, that to me these portraits shall be a sacred shrine before which I shall return to worship, whenever I desire to feel that the world contains purity of heart and beneficence of intention.

Ah! dear lady, you have placed me in a situation in which gratitude has no language for its adequate expression. Take these poor words for what they are worth, and believe me, your devoted slave,

FINN O'BRIEN.

Mrs. Lynch had been a little alarmed when she saw the effect of her gift to the lad. After all, she had reflected, it is only his effusive, Irish way, and means only that he rather likes them. But she wrote him a little letter:—

CLARCES STREET, LONDON.

April, —.

DEAR MR. O'BRIEN,—Your letter has followed me here. I am glad you should care to have Morris's portrait. It is rather like him. I am pleased you should think so well of mine too. One doesn't often meet anybody with so much enthusiasm as you. I am grateful to you for all you have done for my boy.

Believe me to be, very truly yours,

BEATRICE LYNCH.

And yet she read ~~the~~ lad's effusive epistle, not knowing whether to take it seriously. She would not appear to take it very seriously. Placed beside the magistrate's expressions of esteem and regard, however, it was as a flame to a chill draught of air. It was too bad, she told herself, to make such demands on the young man's affection. One's son's tutor should not entertain such very devouring ideas. Still it could do him no great harm in its way, and it was certainly very gratifying to have worship from so stalwart a son of Ireland.

CHAPTER IV.

TRAWLING.—AN INCIDENT.

THE Professor of Zoology—the only enlightened man at the College of Galport—in his enthusiasm for the subject he taught to his class, hired an effete revenue cutter once a year and swept the bay in search of specimens. It depended upon the wind whether the cutter made her journey from end to end of the bay and came back at night; sometimes two days were spent in the excursion, and, to provide against all contingencies, a supply of provisions was arranged for the worst that wind and wave could do. By the invitation of the Professor—himself well provided with sou'-wester, mackintoshes, and sea-boots—Captain Jeffery and Dr. Sullivan joined the band of enthusiastic students who crowded the deck of the cutter on this occasion. The Professor knew the bay as well as if he had been a

lobster, a cod, or a prawn, who had passed all his life between the mud, the sand, and the surface. He could tell where the trawl would bring up this sort of smudge and that kind of chalk. He could tell what "fauna" would fill the net within any given hundred yards, and if the net came up empty he was able to say why on that particular occasion it did so.

The cutter had not cleared out of the harbour before the Professor, standing at a binnacle with a jelly-fish, surrounded by a score of eager, laughing faces, was making his first demonstration.

The cutter was rigged as a schooner, and her sails, as soon as she escaped from the lee of the land, filled pleasantly, and a swift tack was made from shore to shore.

There was plenty of room on deck, and the Professor, with his jelly-fish, put in the line to the pleasure of everybody. The desire for zoological knowledge just at the outset seemed too deep for satisfaction. Everybody had seen a lump of blubber before—but nobody had heard a lump of blubber called by so many hard names.

"Now you ought to be able to tell me,

without hesitation, what it is, Terence M'Grath," said the Professor, his deep bass voice sounding fore and aft over the cutter. "It's a blubber, sir," said that rising zoologist, without hesitation.

"It's an invertebrate animal, otherwise an animal with no back-bone," corrected a student.

"You mean, then, that it's an Irishman," observed a Saxon student, unwilling to miss an opportunity for chaffing.

"Well, that doesn't carry you very far along, Martin. But to be sure it is something. As you may observe from its blancmange movement across the surface of this tarpaulin, it certainly has no back-bone. How do you describe it then technically? Come away, lads, I've described this to you over and over again."

"Protozoa," cried several voices.

"Proto-fiddlesticks!" answered the Professor. "Dacy, you mole of the mountains, sit off that binnacle, will you?"

Professor Dacy, whose short-sightedness made him the victim of many practical jokes of his own creating, had carefully elevated his coat tails, seated himself on the specimen, and

taken out a pouch and a pipe, with the intention of proving what an excellent anti-bilious seaman he was.

“*Pro aris et focis*,” he exclaimed, ruefully dropping his coat-tails, as a roar of laughter saluted his achievement; “you told me it was a clean cutter.”

“The cutter’s clean enough, and you’ve gone and sat upon an important zoological individual—a hydrozoa on a very perfect scale. Ah! good, here’s a companion! Hold up the basin, bos’n,—steady, mind your heads with that boom! About she goes, mind your heads! Now don’t spill that fellow, he’s an excellent hydro; stand round and answer me some questions. O’Grady, what’s his sub-kingdom, now you have the hint?”

“Brachiopoda,” said O’Grady, glibly, with his hand in the ratlines and a meerschaum reeking at his teeth.

“God bless me! is it possible? Brachiopoda!” said the Professor, staggering from ratlines to binnacle with the basin in his hands, and spilling the water freely over the legs and bodies of the students who were now squatting on the deck.

“Do you not know the superficial difference between polyzoa and hydrozoa? Don’t you know a mollusc when you see him? And haven’t you been told that it is a hydrozoa of the sub-kingdom *Cœlenterata*?”

“Poor thing!” said O’Grady, looking into the basin satirically, “it’ll hardly survive all that hard nomenclature. To me, now, Professor, it just seems to be a handful of squash.”

“But I insist upon your observing,” said the Professor, laying down his basin on the binnacle and adjusting his sou’-wester as if he were an aged female—“I insist upon your recognising that it is nothing of the kind. A handful of squash it may be to the eye of ignorance and the tongue of impudence, but to the eye of science and the tongue of humility it is a floating life endowed with singular beauty of form, and, so far as its organisation goes, with a very perfect mechanism for sustaining and reproducing itself upon this rather stormy sea of ours. Dacy, are you ill? Hang it, man! don’t—on as fine a specimen of the free, medusi-form gonophore as ever was carried to these shores

by the warm Gulf Stream. You've given in very soon, Dacy, and I think you said something about an impregnable stomach at De Burgh's lunch—eh? "

And the Professor of Latin, with his face white and green, looking reproachfully at Dr. Sullivan, who had smoked into his face with an air of unconsciousness for a quarter of an hour, murmured something about these vile barracks cigars. Five minutes later, in a condition of violent physical disability, the sounds of his agony came up the sky-light, to the gratification of all who knew him.

"A fine, free, medusi-form gonophore," pursued the Professor of Zoology, looking into his basin. "And let me tell you that in your study of the great sub-kingdom of *Calenterata* you have here nearly all you require for an approximate understanding of its peculiarities. In the handful of squash you have a concealed alimentary canal. You have various membranes composing the substance of its body. You have organs for the transmission of nerve currents and for the passage of blood. Now, as you are all aware, I am an opponent of cram. But there is a little bit of prose music,

composed by a dear friend of mine, descriptive of our dear friend the *Cælaterata*. Can any of you give it me? Martin and O'Grady, I have a flask downstairs. Not one drop of it goes to the man who thinks a sub-kingdom a handful of squash. Can any of you give it me now? And quick about it, for I mean to restore my friend in the basin to the Gulf Stream."

"I know," said a small, quiet lad, with pale eyes and ginger hair.

"Come along with it then."

"Animals composed of numerous merosomes, disposed radially round a longitudinal axis; frequently with a determinable antero-posterior and dorso-ventral plane; distinct body cavity, communicating through mouths with outer world."

"Right, right, my little friend—you will be a corresponding member of the Buffon Club yet. That's a simple and succinct account of the race. Nothing could be simpler—it's a perfect poem. And, hi! Dacy—we can hear you; steady—mind that boom, mind that boom! you at the helm, don't bump her so much—and see, see, all of you, and remember

well against your graduation examinations, that here is the manubrium, the gastero-vascular canals,—don't get ill there! it'll do you good, purifies the circulation, and strengthens the brain,—circular canal, marginal bodies, tentacles. Ay, ay, bos'n, you may bring in the trawl now. Clear decks, lads, for the trawl. Bless me! to be sure, how many of you have gone pale as death, and no sea on to speak of."

There was, however, a considerable sea "on." And to Captain Jeffery and Dr. Sullivan, whose studies were, as became their profession, more in the line of human beings than fish, it was gratifying to see how, one after one, the pipes went out, and the students, losing interest in zoology, joined Professor Dacy below.

By the time the cutter had tacked out into the Atlantic there were not more than four of them able to assist, so that it became a mere fishing expedition. To be sure the Professor of Zoology, as the contents of the trawl were turned over on deck, danced round among the specimens, ejaculating incoherent regrets.

"They have made a perfect sty of the ship,

sir. Hear to them grunting down there—grunting, grunting like a drove of bilious pigs from Clare! And the whole animal kingdom round about. Just look round—a shoal of natatores sitting at the back of the trawl. A family of brevipennatal, short-winged, short-tailed, they are all there together—auks, guilemots, penguin, divers, grebes. What is the difference between a diver and a grebe? Well, a grebe is a grebe, and a diver is a diver. That is, you can tell a grebe when you look at his toes, where there is a deep incised membrane. No, of course you can't always get at his toes—that I am aware. I daresay, by the way, there are plenty of grebe muffs at the Barracks. A diver again—the front toes of a diver are all joined by a membrane. It's a beautiful distinction—and to hear the pigs grunting down below, when they might be here to have the fact impressed on their minds for the mortal remainder of their days! There now is a phalacrocorax. Well, I hope, Doctor, that I am aware a phalacrocorax is a cormorant. You may perceive, however, he is a phalacrocorax. You can see even here how loose the skin of his throat is.

“ You’ve brought a gun, have you? But it’s no use killing to-day. We rush through among them to observe, to classify, to recollect, not to shoot for the fun of the thing. To shoot a hard-working phalacrocorax, with his wife and infant two hundred feet up these cliffs, is an act of assassination. No guns, then, no guns to-day. What’s that paddling out among the waves? Why, man, that is what our friend Dacy’s friend Julius Cæsar might have seen when he first landed on the sister island. That’s a coracle, with an early Briton in it. These islanders go out in anything. Coracle ahoy! Coracle, I say! the rascal knows the cut of the cutter’s jib, thinks it’s revenue, and declines to take any notice. But it is an interesting contribution to the day’s sail. I rather believe the coracle is extinct except on these seas. But, God bless us! these fellows are no further on than when the saints were about. Ah! look up, look up—a man’s hand of anserinæ in the horizon, keeping together. Hard a starboard, Nally! we are far enough out—the trawl is hundreds of feet off the bottom.”

It was evening when the cutter drove back again from the islands and the Atlantic. The hills of Clare stood out blue and menacing on the right hand; on the left the shore of Connemara was wreathed with an unbroken line of white surge. The officers were lying on a gangway, beneath the bulging mainsail, Sullivan fast asleep, with a cape drawn over his head, Jeffery counting the planets as they shot into view overhead. It was a quiet termination to their day's excursion; even the Professor of Zoology, who had expended all the contempt his nature contained on the ineffective stomachs of his students, had subsided into a brown study at the bow, suggested by a flashing pathway of phosphorescence. He had hoped to expound to his class the whole theory of noctiluca in connection with that phenomenon, but now, more in sorrow than in anger, he knew that there was not a man capable of standing up to his demonstration. And the officers had ceased to be curious about the facts of zoology, having relapsed into sleepy frivolousness, as he thought, after a hearty dinner. But Captain Jeffery was not so frivolous as he looked

With the planets swimming into view overhead, the captain felt the mingled dejection and exultation which came of a reverie in which love was the chief ingredient. Rising softly from his gangway, and passing the skylight, up which the sounds of snoring came in great quantity and volume, he leant over the bulwarks at the stern and meditated.

It seemed to him, from that point of view, with the night coming down softly on the water and carrying rays of starry illumination from the farthest spheres, with the mountains still visible, and here a hamlet and there a hamlet twinkling on the sea-margin of them, that his love for Eileen Conran was something sacred. In that soft, strong air of the bay, and with the bubbling and gurgling of the sea in the wake of the cutter filling his ears, he felt himself purified of all gross thoughts. Even the remorse he felt in the recollection of the time when he entertained them, gave way to a satisfaction that now she knew he loved her as pure man might love pure woman, and that there was nothing in the world he would not do for her. It did not trouble him much that he should soon have to think of marrying

her. He could not, in her present state of nature, present her to his friends at the Barracks. But there was no hurry. By-and-bye she could be made known to his friends. In the meantime she might train for her new position. She might go into the nunnery at the Claddagh, and learn, as her swift Irish aptitude must soon teach her, the A B C of social life. He could then introduce her anywhere, and, born princess as she was, she would command her own place among any order of womankind. He was dreaming over these matters when he became aware that the Professor was at his elbow.

“Ah, so glad, so glad, there is at least one congenial spirit on board this stricken ship, this floating ward of the infirmary. We have never been able to determine, Jeffery, whether it should be regarded as a flagellate infusarian, or one of the rhizopoda. I incline to the former opinion myself. We have, you perceive, a wave of palpitating light in our rear.”

“Yes, I’ve been looking at it,” said the captain. “Dead men’s ghosts, eh?”

“*Noctiluca miliaris*, sir. A conversion all along the pathway we are traversing of ner-

vous force into light. Beautiful provision of nature. Exquisite example of the oneness of everything, and the convertibility of each into all. If you are acquainted with religious speculation at all, captain, you will understand it to be a lamp for the Pantheists, our little friend *Noctiluca miliaris*."

"I daresay," said the soldier, reflecting that the Professor was off his head.

"You have never seen my little friend, have you? No, I should believe not. He is not much to look at, when you consider the flare up in our rear. He is a little sphere of sardine, clad in cuticle and corticle layers, wagging a filament. I am not yet convinced about his digestive apparatus. But there he is, blazing away as I have not seen him for a long time do. Nally, take up the trawl. What's going on at St. Columbkil Abbey? There are big bonfires."

"It's the return of the widdy, sor, from London. She has given the boys great reductions, and they're payin' her a thrifle ov respect for that same. Eh—hi O—hi, ho—eh, hi, O. There's a power o' fish in the trawl, Professor."

“It’s been running along the bottom for a couple of miles. Yes, I can see—flat-fish mostly, and a ling like a boa-constrictor.” And the trawl was brought up and turned over.

“What’s that?” asked Jeffery, picking up a bundle to which sea-weeds adhered. He held it to the light at the compass, and detached the weeds from it one by one. At the skylight the Professor was busy classifying the spoil. Captain Jeffery freed the bundle of the overgrowth, and found that he had a mail-bag in his hand.

“Professor, here’s something queer—a mail-bag brought up from the bottom of the sea. And, by Jove, a Barracks mail-bag. Here’s the brass plate. And waxed and sealed for transmission. This must have got overboard some punt by accident. I’ll take it home with me. It’s official, and will have to be reported.”

Professor Dacy, limp and seedy, made his appearance on the off-side of the mainsail.

“Are we near the harbour?” he chattered, looking to the Abbey of St. Columbkille lit up at half a score of places, and shining in the starlight with a lurid glare of flames around it.

“What is that, helmsman?” he asked, clutching the boom.

“A welcome to the widdy, sor. She’s afther makin’ herself a favourite, and the boys are meetin’ her half way.”

“This is a bundle of rent-books,” observed Jeffery, whose knife, busy with the sea-weed, had made a hole in the bag.

“Oh, the Bay of Galport is full of them,” said Dacy, making a weak effort to steady himself, and to speak as if his illness had been an affectation which he was prepared to throw off. “Butler told me that the secret societies had arranged to purloin all the rent-books to destroy them, and that a number of the agents, using that pretext, were glad to take the opportunity of getting rid of them.”

“Very likely,” said the captain, holding a book to the lamp, and reading to himself the marriage certificate of Michael Conran and Eileen Lynch. “Very likely,” he pursued, catching a sentence here and there, which seemed to have a further bearing on the same subject. “Corporal,” he cried to an orderly, who was smoking amidships, “put that in my empty game-bag, will you?”

CHAPTER V.

MRS. LYNCH'S SUITORS.

THE morning after her arrival at Tasmania, Beatrice Lynch dressed herself with exceeding taste and care. She expected that some of her friends would pay her visits during the day, and she meant to show herself among them divested of a little of her widowhood.

Not that she was prepared to announce to the gentlemen of the Admiration Club that she had selected the magistrate as her partner for life, though sooner or later such announcement must come, she sighed to think. But the dark colours which had so long surrounded her, as it were, with the shadow of the decease of the late Major, were replaced by lighter ones. She turned over her jewellery, and emphasised the exquisiteness of her ears by two drops of fine diamonds. A spray of diamonds toned down the warmth of her chestnut hair, and a diamond star at her

throat cooled the voluptuous impression of her bosom. She could not help smiling on herself, when for the first time for years she saw her girlhood thoroughly restored to her; and it was a true story of graciousness and ease which she read in her mirror, with laughter on her lips.

"I think I will do, Girling," she remarked to her maid.

"I should think you would, madam," said the admiring Girling, to whose imagination the throwing off of the last of the weeds, and the assumption of the pearl-grey dress, seemed like the abandonment of a cloud by such a heavenly orb as the moon or one of the greater stars.

Girling read poetry, and used to think in it when she was adjusting her mistress.

"I hope you will never need them again, madam."

"But I have been told that there is so much luminosity about me that I do very well to be laced up in black. I am really almost too luminous," continued Mrs. Lynch, with her hand upon her shining hair, and her violet eyes flashing congratulation upon the reflection of her own figure.

“How can you say so, madam?”

“Ah! who has come first, I wonder?” said Mrs. Lynch, looking from her window to the lawn, where there was the sound of horses’ hoofs. “I can’t see. Find out, Girling, who it is. I hope it is not the magistrate—I could not possibly see the magistrate first. I am curious to know.”

“Lord Mountinnes, madam.”

“Oh! poor Mountinnes—is that all? How soon he is, to be sure. I wonder if he thinks he can possibly be the most welcome visitor here? But he is not a bad fellow. He will do very well to begin the day with. I shall go down and see him.”

Mrs. Lynch found Lord Mountinnes in the front drawing-room, pulling the petals out of a rose. He was looking, as he generally did, as solemn as a barn-owl, though it was probable enough that he was experiencing the liveliest emotions of joviality.

“Mountinnes, this is kind of you, you are the first of the knights of the Round County Club Table to bid me welcome.”

“Er—Beatrice—Mrs. Lynch I mean, er—you are welcome back again. Er—how is

London? Tell me everything. I have stolen a march on the rest of them. There isn't a knight likely to be forthcoming for hours."

"For hours, my lord—and do you flatter yourself that I can give you hours, when I am only just come? London is very well, but I have seen very little of it this season, and it has all been so serious—Parliamentary London and religious London, don't you know? I have come back a reformed character, to administer my property according to O'Gee. O'Gee's eloquence is all the talk. He has become the devouring passion of the metropolis and of the provinces. Who would have thought it—O'Gee, the staid, red, professorial O'Gee—O'Gee of the Law Courts—coming out in the line of fiery patriotism? I suppose you have heard of him over here?"

"Heard—er—of O'Gee? Yes, I've heard of him. Er—O'Connell is nothing to him in the popular imagination. O'Gee is coming out to give the discontent a fillip. Demonstrations are preparing for him all over the West and—er—the South. Have you no scandals to tell me, Bea—er—Mrs. Lynch?"

"I am not in the scandalous world now, my

lord. I have been assailed all summer by rectors and curates and Members of Parliament. I have made up my mind to turn Catholic, so that I may insure myself against being proposed for by every sainted bantling who wears a gown and bands."

"Er—don't, Beatrice—er—Mrs. Lynch! The country is going rapidly enough to the dogs already. Don't turn Catholic."

"How would you like, my lord, to be followed about by Protestant parsons, and when your poor heart is breaking with sins and you want good spiritual advice, to be advised, 'Marry me off-hand, and your sins will be forgiven you'? I am tired of it, my lord. Who is that? And that?"

"They are—er—devilish early on the field," said Lord Mountinnes, looking with disgust upon the car of Mr. De Burgh and the horse of Captain Thorburn. "Next to the magistrate, that tarry man sits a horse worse than anybody I ever saw on one—er—look at him! How can you be civil to him after he has ridden over your auracarias?"

The drawing-room began to fill up. Captain Thorburn, of the gunboat, a neat little man

with fine hands and a diabolical sparkle in his eye, made himself very much at home ; Giant De Burgh, whose elbow swept the ornaments about, loomed above the mantelpiece and indulged in a series of loud unprovoked laughs.

“ We are discussing O’Gee,” said Mrs. Lynch, who took a chair free of encumbrances, where she was visible in all the brilliance of her light apparel. “ I have been telling Lord Mountinnes that O’Gee is looked upon in England as the new saviour of Ireland.”

“ O’Gee save Ireland ! ” roared De Burgh, with a cachinnation which filled the room with noise, and made a small terrier at his feet retreat in dismay to a safe place behind a screen—“ O’Gee save Ireland ! Why, O’Gee has been everything by turns and nothing long, and cares no more for the mere Irish than the chief of the police does. He’s just keeping himself afloat. I called on him when I was in London at his rooms in Bloomsbury, and what d’y e think I saw ? Six little O’Gees eating bread and jam ; Mrs. O’Gee persuading a bailiff that he had no power of arrest over a Member of Parliament, and O’Gee, with

his bedroom door open, snoring serenely. Ridiculous—the saviour of Ireland! He's simply saving his own bacon."

"But that is just the sort of man that does save a nation. I am sure he nearly made me weep in the Ladies' Gallery at his description of our poor peasantry. I never heard anything so harrowing, and I'm afraid so true. I have come back with the most serious views about my own estates, and I assure you I mean to carry them out. Ah! Bishop, how are you? I am glad to see you, Mr. Butler. Professor Dacy, I hope Mrs. Dacy has recovered. Yes? And why is she not with you? Ah, Professor Thomson, I saw a charming account of your trawling this year. How is Mrs. Thomson? And why did she not come? Is that the Colonel? Why have you not brought Mrs. Malcolm?"

There was quite a gathering of middle-aged and elderly gentlemen in the drawing-room. There was much noisy talk, and the widow, resplendent in her light dress, was charming. Most of the single men in the room, some time or other, had proposed to her. Most of them thought that the whirligig of time would

still bring in matrimonial revenges for them. It was understood, however, that the magistrate had a dangerous claim upon her, though the Bishop was, perhaps, most earnestly in love.

The Bishop in the simplicity of his heart had advanced his chair quite close to hers, heedless of De Burgh's trumpeting from the fender.

"Your return to Ireland," said the Bishop, rolling his eyes a little, so that the whites were visible behind his spectacles, "is a joy to all your friends, Mrs. Lynch. Personally I have missed the inestimable value of your advice in some of my schemes."

"You are very kind, I am sure, but my advice is of very little consequence. I am going over to the Catholic Church. I have been persecuted so much by unmarried rectors that I have made up my mind to join a communion where the clergy are debarred from proposing."

The Bishop was about to blow his nose. He held his lawn handkerchief in his right hand. But he laid the handkerchief away again, abandoned the intention, and looked

pitifully round him. De Burgh trumpeted with delight; and the magistrate brought his chair almost in proximity to the widow's. He felt himself to be master of the situation, and had, indeed, tried the effect of talking to a group of four or five as if he were the real head of the house, to whom they owed their welcome; but he was peremptorily snubbed by the Colonel. Now, however, he thought his opportunity had arrived. He bent over the widow, and in a confidential tone, which seemed to cover a great deal of unrevealed affection, remarked in a cooing voice that he hoped Morris was in good health. Morris was an excellent point in his favour. Nobody had remembered his existence except the magistrate. It was universally felt that the magistrate had scored heavily.

A storm of questions was, therefore, addressed to Mrs. Lynch about Morris. Where was Morris? How old was Morris now? He must be a tall fellow. How did he like London? Couldn't he be fetched in somehow?

"Er—" the voice of Lord Mountinnes was heard remarking, with painful distinctness, as a lull fell upon the room—"er—what devilish

humbug! Who wants to see the little brute? Er—I don't." The magistrate had certainly made a point, but his assumption of triumphant ownership in the widow ruined its effect. For, rising from her chair, she metaphorically and almost physically shook him off, as she advanced to the bell-handle.

"Mr. De Burgh, I have seen you drink water twice. Ask what you want. All of you ask what you want. My dear Professor Thomson, I was so glad to notice somewhere that you had solved something about seaweed or something—of course with all the Latin names and terminologies. I couldn't quite understand what it was."

"Ah, I have just found out my little friend noctiluca at last, and I have exposed him. His shining is no longer a mystery. I am going over to the British Association, and I hope to make a flare-up with him that will astonish some observers, to whom he is even yet only an opaque sarcode. The whole thing is——"

"Colonel, I shall expect you to join my party on the 12th. De Burgh's people have been sending their sheep and cattle all up and down Slieve Innes. There is an idea among

them ~~that~~ Slieve Innes is their feeding ground from time immemorial, and they tell me that the young heather, where the grouse promised so well in May, is all trampled over. On Slieve-bann there is nothing to shoot except egg shells. It's heart-rending! But at St. Columbkille they have not pushed their rights to any great extent. The moor behind the abbey is swarming with grouse; the people are quite well-behaved, and I expect we shall have a good time. I have been practising all summer, in my leisure moments covering my eye with the muzzle of a choke-bore in front of a mirror. I have an instinct that I shall have a most deadly aim. If you would like to bring any of your young warriors, I shall be so glad."

And then the talk ran on, the widow gaily passing from man to man, and saying here a word and there a word that, like an arrow, sped home to the heart of the listener. One of those serious pauses which overtake the most garrulous rooms had settled down on them. Mrs. Lynch was explaining to Captain Thorburn, with the aid of the Professor of Zoology, the botany of a white waxy-looking

flower in the window, when the door opened and Finn O'Brien made his appearance. He had that mixture of boldness and timidity in his appearance which at once suggested to his seniors that it was best to treat him in such a way that the boldness should wholly lean over to timidity's side.

He was known to none of them except the magistrate and Professor Dacy. They paid no attention to him, however, except indirectly, for the Professor in a pointed manner began to explain that there were students at the Galport College who never paid their fees, and who yet went about as if they were men of property in the country.

Finn understood the allusion, and quailed under it; but the sight of Mrs. Lynch's figure in the window restored him to high courage. De Burgh, who had never seen him before, and who had a natural liking for anything young which suggested the lustiness of strength, drew the Colonel's attention to the lad.

"A pretty fellow," said the Colonel, above his soda-water. "Who is he? Don't seem to know anybody."

“Ah, Mr. O’—— Eh? I forget your name. I suppose you are looking after a little tuition,” observed the magistrate, strolling towards Finn, and patronising him as crushingly as he could.

The widow turned at the window, and her eyes met Finn’s. She had been as cool as a marble statue in her intercourse with the maturer visitors. Over her face there now passed the gentlest flush of confusion, as she came forward and put her hand in Finn’s. She had no emotional word of welcome for him; he remained, stammering, with her hand in his.

In that moment it stood revealed to the whole room that the widow had given a little of her heart to this full-blooded, able-bodied youth. It was a revelation to all of them that Beatrice Lynch’s composure should show itself capable of being ruffled. Alternations of mood they were all acquainted with. From banter to laughter and back again to seriousness they had all followed her. But here was girlish confusion. What did it mean? Was there any story at the back of it? Had this high-coloured, finely-built Irish youth successfully made love to her?

“Poor Butler!” said the Colonel, laying down his tumbler and looking knowingly into De Burgh’s distended eyes. The magistrate felt his position. He approached the young people, therefore, with the view of rescuing Mrs. Lynch from her embarrassment.

“The tutor,” he exclaimed in a high voice, “will probably like to see his pupil.”

The remark drove all the girlishness out of the widow. She drew Finn towards De Burgh and the Colonel and introduced him.

“Mr. O’Brien is to be of my party on the 12th.”

CHAPTER VI.

EILEEN AND HER FATHER.

EILEEN CONRAN had become a patriot partly through the force of singing old songs, partly through the continuous spectacle of starving peasants on their way to the Galport quays, partly because from her infancy she had been used to her father speaking of England as a loathsome despotism, from whose power it was the duty of every Irish man, woman, and child to try to free Ireland. Michael's patriotism was, however, fed by objects which appealed but little to Eileen. He justified a rather extensive smuggling practice by his disavowal of English influences; he held his own over the Claddagh because he was known to be on mysterious terms with that outer world of intrigue which in the course of time was to make all things bright for the Claddagh and the western shore. Eileen cared nothing

about the spoil which was run into the rocky store, except that her imagination was ablaze with the idea that by her hand the country should be armed when the momentous hour should come for the general throwing off of tyranny. The material gains of the cause they represented, all unknown to magistrates, sub-inspectors, informers, and soldiers, were of no account in her eyes. She had the smallest sense of value,—a sense developed less, perhaps, in the Irish than in any other European people, and the absence of which, if it leaves room for the virtues of a heedless generosity, and a certain simplicity of material aims, gives a fictitious look of ruin and decay to districts sufficiently prosperous from the Irish point of view.

* * * * *

“Father,” said Eileen, one evening when they sat alone, Michael ruminating upon nothing, his daughter busy with foot and hand upon a spinning-wheel.

“It’s me you’re speakin’ to?”

“The girls all get married.”

“The more fool to them they do.”

“There isn’t one of them my own age and looks in the Claddagh but she has been run away with.”

“Like enough, the geese that they are. It’s a fine funning they think it is as long as the lad’s stoppin’ their mouths with kisses behind the peat-stack. It’s another pair of shoes when he comes ashore soakin’, without a fish to his thumb, and three or four repetitions of himself crawlin’ from the fire to the bait-box.”

“No, they’re not so spruce after as before,” said Eileen, drawing her distaff from a belt of brown sea-cord which she had tied round her waist, and striking her spindle with her right hand till it gyrated and hummed. She fed her spindle till her flax required renewing, and, while she adjusted a new supply, she said over the top of it,

“You would miss me if I was to be run away with, father.”

Michael started as if he had been shot, put out his arm to a turf-box, and tossed three mighty sods upon the fire.

“It’ll be an evil day for the man that tries it on, Eileen. Miss you? What do you think

I keep sober three out of seven days in the week for? ”

“ Because you’re king o’ the Claddagh and know your duties.”

“ It’s wrong you are.”

“ Because you know that the priest says that an enemy in the mouth steals away the heart.”

“ It’s wrong you are.”

“ Because you know that I’m a daughter of yours and a daughter of Eileen Lynch’s, and you haven’t it in you to disgrace your daughter and disremember the memory of your wife.”

Michael crossed himself. He rose and went to the window and kneeled in front of the altar. He returned to his seat at the fire, his hands drooping between his legs and his eyes on the floor, while Eileen’s spindle whirled with a velocity which seemed begotten of the stellar spaces.

“ Sure, Eileen, and tho’ it’s king o’ the Claddagh I am, it’s king I am because you are there. It’s no pleasure in the wide world to knock a man down on the bridge thrice a week because justice has no other way. No,

indeed. Eileen darlin', don't, don't run away! I look lusty and young, when I'm spent and aged. Yes, darlin', spent and aged; and if it's over the harbour bar you went with a spalpeen for his pleasure, when me that loves you would die for you, and he wouldn't wag his little finger a month after you're abed to him—Eileen, Eileen, Eileen!"

And the king of the Claddagh, forgetful of his dignity, drew his arm across his eyes and wept.

"I'm nothing, nothing whatever," he blubbered, "and you've humbled me to the dust."

Eileen tried not to look at him, but went on at her wheel, twirling the spindle till it sang like a telegraph wire in a storm; but the spindle was idle, for Eileen dried her own eyes with the end of the distaff, and sat there, her bosom throbbing and no work being done, till her father had recovered himself.

"Father, there's Conny Carmichael who will take my place any time. There's Antony Carmichael who would like to be king."

"Damn Antony! an' I wish he was fifty fathom down among the buckies."

"Now that's just your pride of place, father. You would like to be king always."

"And if I'm the best sea-farin' man and the most righteous judge, why should I not be king for always? Do you suppose that Antony Carmichael would take the same trouble with the boys' little quarrels as I do? And is Conny the favourite with them that you are?"

"But, father dear, if it's a lover that came askin' me with a loving heart, and willin' to go to the world's end for my sake, would it not be natural to say 'Yes' to him? I'm sure it's no more than my mother said to yourself."

Eileen resumed her spinning, and even added to its humming a stave or two of a Celtic song. Michael said nothing, but reaching his arm to the rafters, extracted a gun. While Eileen sang he prepared a charge, and rammed it home with fierce emphasis, pouring in shot without measuring.

"We haven't had a wild duck to our potatoes for ever so long," said Eileen.

"No," said Michael, putting back the gun, and resuming his dejected look at the fireside.

"Will ye be takin' a shot, think ye?"

"It's waitin' him, Eileen Conran. And it's into his face that charge will fly whenever I know him. Run away with you, is it?" he roared in a sudden paroxysm of anger, bringing down the gun again.

"I'll take you out of the Claddagh altogether, and go where there's nobody to see you. Girl, who is he, that I may see him now, at once, and make an end of him?"

Eileen was a little alarmed at the savage spring and the peering madness of expression of her father, who gun in hand crouched at the further side of her wheel. But she did not stop working. She only drew her head up and put more fierceness of inattention into her action.

"It's not me you would think to fear with a gun and a loud voice, is it? Take your seat again, father, and be calm and quiet and listen to what I say to you."

Michael took his seat, dandling his gun affectionately. But Eileen wrought on and said nothing. Michael's face, darkened with anger, was contorted from mouth to eyebrow.

"And it was on her bed of death, Eileen Conran, that she made me swear on

the cross, when the sacred oil had anointed her brow, that I would watch over you and guard you and protect you and keep the harm of common men from you, and see that if married you ever were you would get one worthy of your family and of yourself. And what is it I've done? Haven't I kept the book-learnin' away from you that there might be no danger? And now is it one of the Claddagh fishers, like myself, coarse and low, that you would turn your heart upon? I could have schooled you in the Nunnery, and given you to the best in the land, and now you're turnin' round on me. You make me wish it was your wake and your grave you were preparin', and not a marriage at all."

"Now then, father, and you are too hasty altogether. If you'll bethink yourself, you'll see that I never said I was going to get married at all. I only said 'if,' and you know what they say of 'ifs' and 'ands.' I was just puttin' a case to you because other girls marry, and it seemed to me that I might, maybe, be asked, for I'm not so plain and homely that a man might not take a fancy to me. Now if I was asked by one of the

grand creatures you're thinking of, not by an honest, poor man from the shore, what would you say?"

"What I do say is, that Ireland has none such in these days. If you marry Irish, you must marry poor; to be marryin' anything that's not poor in this country is to be marryin' an Englishman,—ah! curse them an' the grip they have of us,—and to be marryin' an Englishman, would be to marry a lawyer, or a soldier, or a priest in the cursed Protestant Church. Ye understand, Eileen?"

"I do, father. Ye mean that I'm not to marry Irish because I would have to marry poor, and I'm not to marry rich because I would have to marry English. So I mustn't marry at all. And I might as well take the veil at once, and put my arm inside Sister Maria's, and be caged for the remainder of my days."

Michael had his hand on his eyes, but he peered at his daughter through them, as if by scrutinising her unawares he could see deeper into her nature. Eileen had drawn out all her threads in her spindle. She laid her wheel aside, and with her arms folded, looking into the fire sadly, said,

"You need never fear, father. I have renounced love just as much as if I were inside the Nunnery walls."

"Eileen, in America there's plenty of American men—great, brave, true, and with hearts warm to Ireland—who would suit ye. Keep up, and don't give in because I declare to you there's none here fit for you, and you can't marry English. I'll find an American lad for you yet that your heart will go out to. Don't despair, Eileen."

"I have renounced love," said Eileen, as if she had not heard a word, "and I have given my heart to Ireland. When we have freed Ireland, father, and thrown down these barrack walls—" Eileen stopped and sighed—"and driven the usurpers off the land, it will not be that every girl who marries Irish marries poor. And, indeed, indeed, to marry poor is no such great hardship, if it's love you take along with it. What's riches to me, or to you either? Is it a peat-snuff we care for them? No love for me, no love for me!" wailed Eileen, dropping her voice mournfully, and looking despairingly away from her father and the instrument of death he was nursing in his arms.

“Sure, there, my daughter, an’ isn’t Ireland big enough for ye?”

“Big enough, big enough,” chanted Eileen, withdrawing from the turf fire and seeking the darkness of her own room.

Her casement was open, and the sea was moaning on the rocks at her feet. She mingled her cry with the voice of the waters and the night-birds who were crying over them.

“Oh, mother, mother, why did I ever live to see him and to taste the sweetness of his lips? Keep me from temptation.”

And she laid her head on her pillow, and for a time gave free vent to her grief.

CHAPTER VII.

O'GEE AND THE STRANGER.

A GREAT day had been prepared for Galport. O'Gee was the hero of it. He had been the hero of great days all over Ireland, and was winding up with Galport. Wherever O'Gee had appeared in an Irish community, detachments of blue-coated constables, headed by a sub-inspector with a sword, had been drafted in to watch him.

The constables carried revolvers inside their coats and had buckshot in a pouch, and, once or twice, they had scattered a shower of it about O'Gee's auditors. Not a stray pellet, however, had reached O'Gee's body, and not one of the many thousand bruises distributed in his behoof in his progress throughout Ireland had been inflicted upon himself.

By the time O'Gee reached Galport he was as rubicund, jovial, and patriotic as when he

first started on his journey of agitation ; the recollection of platform scimmages and red, unwashed faces only added to the weight of his descriptive rhetoric, and proved the better what he was contending, that the mighty heart of Ireland was beating as one man against the tyranny of England.

O'Gee had rooms taken for him in the Grand Hotel in the square of Galport. It literally was a grand hotel, having been built in a sanguine moment to meet the supposed exigencies of a new American traffic which was about to open up in these parts.

At the moment when Mr. O'Gee is introduced to the reader, he is standing in the open paved hall of the hotel, round which a spacious gallery is carried to the bedrooms and private rooms of the first-class visitors to the place.

A bar-window opens out upon the hall and corridors, and O'Gee is standing among a small crowd of admirers, who have brought him to Galport to hear him. They are chiefly municipal persons, who sympathise with O'Gee and his movement ; but there is one notable figure, in a broad-rimmed straw hat, loose breeches,

and ornamental waistcoat of a gorgeous green, with a flaxen moustache, grey eyes, and penetrating nasal voice, who is not local. He is either American, or striving hard to be considered such. For he has all the peculiarities of an American of the old chewing school, which "guessed" and "calculated," "reckoned" and "considered" every opinion before it was delivered, and in delivering it, used the drawl and the spittle alternately to keep up the attention and heighten the dramatic effect.

O'Gee, brief, stout, demonstrative, with a capacity of language which found itself much damaged and insulted by contradiction, is striving to put down the Yankee. The Yankee had tried him with half-a-dozen passwords and signs of secret American societies; and lastly, in despair, had offered him a common Freemason sign known to the wife of every member of a Masonic lodge; but with no effect. O'Gee is a patriotic politician, agitating on constitutional lines, and has nothing to do with secret societies. He has, however, suspected the Yankee of making advances in that way, and looking from face to face of the municipal

group, as if he could read "Secret Society" in the face of any member of one, remarks, "We owe a good deal to America, albeit it drains our dearest life-blood year after year. But I'm not at all certain that our cause would not gain most by the initiative of patriotism drawn from within, than with the impulse of sanguinary sedition communicated from without."

"I suppose," said the Yankee, spitting upon the toe of O'Gee's black boot, "that means that you would rather jaw the British Government than knock it on the head."

"You have forgotten your manners on the road over the Atlantic," said O'Gee, taking a napkin off the arm of a waiter and stooping to wipe his boot.

"Allow me, Mr. O'Gee. I will consider it an honour. An honour, indeed, to remove even a mark from your boot. Who was it said that he was unworthy to untie the latchet of the shoe of the Founder of Christianity? Well, I'm not John the Baptist—I'm only John O'Rooney; but there's truth in the feeling at all events. Your boot is now as black as my hat, Mr. O'Gee, and I'm sure my friend Joyce

Horsa Gorton had no serious intention of forgetting his manners."

"We shouldn't do that other side of the Pond," said Gorton, deliberately aiming at the toe of the municipal person who had cleaned O'Gee's boot. "Our motto is, 'If you don't take that darn'd thing out o' there I'll spit in it,' whether it be boot or spittoon, foot or face, or head, if, that is, it's on the floor, at an angle of fifty off the spitter's jaw. Now."

Being a politician of great weight and renown, O'Gee knew very well that a loss of temper may often be the loss of an important cause.

He gathered his emotions together again, therefore, and presented a shining countenance full of humour and patience to the Yankee.

"Well, friend, now that an unpleasant incident has been physically and morally wiped out,—physically by the napkin of our good and attentive friend the waiter,—yes, George, I'll take another glass, and you can fill up the rest of the glasses, No. 15,—morally by the conduct of my good friend the coming mayor of Galport,—let me observe, Mr. Gorton, that I believe we are all making for the same goal

by different roads. Ireland for the Irish, I take it, is Horsa Gorton's motto as well as Abraham O'Gee's."

"It is, Abraham," said the Yankee, gravely *inclining his head* to the orator, as he put a little of the liquor down his own throat.

"So far so good," said O'Gee, imitating him, and doing with his little finger what he thought he had seen the Yankee do. He belonged to no secret or masonic societies himself; but he thought there was no harm in drawing advantages from being supposed to belong to them.

"It is, Abraham, but t'other side the Pond we of the true-Irish breed of all the centuries,—the Autochthones and originals of the land,—we get a little tired of your style. Spit on the boots of the British Government, Abraham, and I can assure you, from having had my finger and thumb on the pulse of the American-Irish, that we would thank you for it more than for the cry of Ireland for the Irish by constitutional means. Now, I'm American. Guess you can all tell that by one circumspect glance at my coat-tail, where there is a six-shooter, and at my waistcoat pocket, where,

in addition to a gold lever, there is a quid-box—I have a little of it now in my left jaw—Virginian it is, and sweet and good at that—but these are my conclusions drawn from this thumb and finger having lately rested upon the pulse of the American people.”

“But there’s a pulse in the thumb, sir, and perhaps it’s it your feelin’ when you think it’s the throb of America. I’ve been in America.”

Gorton looked at the apothecary who had just spoken, expectorated, and said, with his right hand at his coat tails,—

* “Well, now, and I reckon you were too clever by half for a noo people like us. But we have our roots deep down. Mark me, sir, the true Irish breed is an American edition of it, cut adrift from priestcraft, severed from landlords, and roaming at large from Manhattan to Yosemite. That’s how it is for high, anyhow. We mayn’t have manners, but we have our roots deep down. I’m a Horsa Gorton by my father; I don’t deny it. And my father’s people are all of the early English kind—Hengist and Horsa from Schleswig-Holstein. I know them swamps, too. But on my mother’s side I’m a Joyce. I’m a ten

triber, and I feel the fire of impetuous Celtic blood course through my Scandinavian body anyhow. And it makes me feel ten-tribish to come over here and know the sentiments of America, and hear you, Abraham O'Gee, talk as if the A B C multiplied into infinity, and well gased by O'Gee & Co., in the lobbies of your London Parliament, will effect the reforms due to Celtic blood across the Pond."

O'Gee saw that he had an enthusiast to deal with, noticed Finn O'Brien standing in the doorway, looked at his watch, and promised himself the honour and pleasure of meeting Mr. Gorton at dinner-time.

* * * * *

Gorton from the coffee-room window saw after a couple of hours that O'Gee had at least been successful in raising the enthusiasm of some of the people of Galport. The information came to him first of all in the clattering of horses' feet. A score of mounted men in blue charged past the window and disappeared at one angle of the Square, while at another a roaring mob of men in frieze

coats, with a forest of sticks swaying and clattering overhead, made its appearance at another.

Gorton put a tooth-pick between his lips and looked philosophically at the seething mass, and calculated how long it would take to roll round in the direction of the hotel.

"George," he observed to the waiter, who in the excitement had cast down a tray and served up a table-napkin, under the impression that it was a cutlet,—“George,” he said calmly, “I think there is hope for this people yet. Open the window. Very good. That’s very good. Now I don’t mind admitting that it’s the heaviest noise in a log-yard I’ve ever experienced. And I’ve been a lumberer in the Saskatchewan in my time. Now, what do you suppose it’s all about? Ah! they’re demolishing a residence. Well, now. The windows do go in and down, and there’s the door off its hinges. What’s that they’re throwing out? Files of the *Irish Constitutional Protestant*? Well, now. And is that object which has just come head first from the second floor the Protestant himself? It’s the editor, is it? Well, now. I guess his next leading

article will be a little mixed. What? Types, cases, stone — all his goods and chattels coming down after him. They're thorough, right thorough men these, and great things may be made of them. Now what's this? Why it's O'Gee himself. He's a little teased out, I reckon, and seems to have more crumpled shirt about him than when he left—O'Gee shoulder high. It's a great and glorious position for him. Another shoulder high—a lad who, you bet, has never been in them altitudes before. A third shoulder high—well, now, if the Protestant-Conventionals aren't charged by the men in blue. Is there a good roomy infirmary in Galport, George? Well, now, I guess some brain-pans here have been tapped. These fellows lay about right merrily. Poof! Blue smoke—ah, well, boys, guess it is time to retire."

"Mr. O'Gee, Sir," proceeded Gorton, coming out of his window to greet O'Gee, who hatless, breathless, red, foaming, and without one button upon his person adhering to anything, panted into the coffee-room, "I may have made some observations derogatory to your agitation, but I now offer you a

handsome apology. The masterly manner in which you have stirred up that crowd to this work has been apparent to me in the speedy demolition of that newspaper office; other side the square. The crowd that can do that, sir, can achieve its freedom. George, uncork three bottles of champagne, and be as quick as greased lightning. Mr. O'Gee and his young friend there—I am proud and happy to make your acquaintance—have earned their drinks."

O'Gee was so feckless, that he could only sit, a breathing rotundity waiting for champagne to be poured into him.

"Fill the meter and the gas will come back," said Gorton, giving the orator a tumbler.

"Now, sir, what is your name? I will wire this victory over the habitable universe, and you shall be known wherever the human tongue speaks Irish. Finn O'Brien—very good, a name that only requires to be sounded to give a voucher of its Celtic antiquity. Gentlemen all, this is to the Liberation of Ireland—no heel-taps."

"No heel-taps," said quite a crowd of men,

who had found their way in the wake of O'Gee.

"Mr. O'Gee, sir," said the forthcoming mayor, "you are Ireland's deliverer."

"Mr. O'Gee," said a man behind him, "methought I heard the manacles fall off ov her."

"Mr. O'Gee, I'm free to take heavy odds against any man, that two years of this work will hunt the odious tyrants from the Castle into the Bay of Dublin, and send landlords, agents, soldiers, and policemen flyin' helter-skelter out of it entirely. . No heel-taps."

"Mr. O'Gee," said another, "I knew Dan personally, and I'm safe to say that Dan never stirred the hearts of his auditors like this, never in the world."

"What I like about it," said Gorton, imperceptibly winking round the group, "is that the thunder and the lightning ain't very far off each other. Now, it's more lightning we want for Ireland. I don't deprecate the thunder. Very good it is in its own way. But commend me to the shaft which strikes. Gentlemen, look at the premises of the *Constitutional Protestant*, and hope for Ireland.

And don't disparage the lightning, and the work it can and will do.

* * * * *

Finn O'Brien dined with some members of the corporation and Mr. O'Gee. Finn had distinguished himself. The great meeting which O'Gee had addressed from a wooden platform erected in the market-place was a passionate success. It yelled and threw up caps as none of O'Gee's meetings had done in other parts of Ireland. For enthusiasm and a sense of O'Gee's eloquence Galport vindicated itself as a first community.

Finn's part was, of course, very subordinate to O'Gee's. It was that of moving a vote of thanks to the orator and to express his belief that the academic intelligence was on the side of O'Gee. Finn assumed that in his person the universities and colleges of Ireland, and indeed of the United Kingdom, were represented. He even essayed to say that he had intelligence from France, Italy, and Germany, which made it certain that they too thought as the students of Galport thought. This assumption of the representative capacity for the young educating idea all over Europe

was successful in the extreme. Finn was not a graduate; but just before he ascended the platform, a committee man of O'Gee's enveloped him in a graduate's gown and put a doctor of divinity's hat on his head. And nothing could have been more effectual than the result. His bright boy's face glowed partly with a mischievous sense of humour, partly with a temporary feeling that he was an incarnated university, and that what he told the gaping, grinning mob in front of him was the truth about the students of the world. And it may have been, for, practically, what he said was that from the principal to the hangman's henchman, who wiped the tables of the dissecting-room, there was nothing but educational misrepresentation in Ireland. The students as a body had no sympathy with those who taught them. They were all in a conspiracy, as the national bard of a neighbouring nation put it, to make students "gang in stirks an' come oot asses." He for one had no intention of coming out an ass, and he knew many others who as "stirks" would crop the herbage of the American prairies rather than wear the asinine yoke and not give

their sympathy to Ireland for the Irish and Irish ideas. Personally he regarded the professoriate of Galport as a collection of charlatans, and as Luther had nailed, wrongly he believed, but boldly they would all admit, a defiance, upon a church-door, to Catholic Christendom, he meant to nail "Charlatan" on the doors of the professoriate of Galport. And see if there would not be a waking up of the dry bones—idle, dusty, musty, fusty bones of the odious professors of the college of Galport.

The mob did not see the bearing of these remarks on their national land and repeal movement, but they saw an enthusiastic young Irishman, robed in the hat and gown of sagacity, pointing skywards with his right hand and seeming to feel deeply what he said. So they cheered him, and by-and-bye, when some unsympathetic Orangemen tried to introduce sarcasm, and brought their own fate upon themselves, they chaired him to the hotel in the rear of the great O'Gee himself. And O'Gee having heard the speech with attention and witnessed the effect, and judging from experience that his young friend would

probably rue his remarks about the college authorities, insisted that he should eat well and drink well; and talked to him glowingly of the great career open to Irish youths, with patriotism in their hearts, and brains and tongues to make it tell, so that Finn rose in a very exuberant state from the orator's table.

He was just going down the steps in the darkness, on his way back to Loughan, when George touched him on the shoulder and whispered mysteriously—"You are wanted, sir, in number twelve suite of apartments."

George had his finger on his lips and seemed—though Finn could not be sure, he had taken so much champagne—to know signs No. 2 and No. 3 of the Fenian code of his special brotherhood. He followed him, therefore, upstairs without further ado, and sat down in a magnificent sitting-room, where a great fire blazed. Over the fire-place he noticed a flag of stars and stripes was hanging. In a minute or two a tall, grave gentleman, with grey moustache and keen grey eye, dressed in the plain uniform of a general officer, opened a side-door and entered. He had a green flag in one hand emblazoned with

the sunburst; in another he had a sealed packet. It was Horsa Gorton, so metamorphosed that if he had seen himself in a mirror a few hours ago, he could not have recognised in the staid, straight, military gentleman, the travestie on the American people who had been performing downstairs.

“Mr. O’Brien,” said Gorton, putting out his hand, “I am glad to take your hand as a representative of the Brotherhood.”

He was as grave and dignified as if he already commanded the armies of a liberated Ireland. “Patrick Macmahon has told me of you,” he proceeded, “and to-day I have seen for myself what stuff is in you. Take this; it’s your commission in the true army of Ireland. You are a member of my own staff. Now, champagne is very well, O’Brien; but no more to-night. You know your flag.” And Gorton, bowing gravely, went back into his apartment.

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. LYNCH AND EILEEN.

PAINTING was one of Mrs. Lynch's accomplishments. She was not a versatile painter. She could not put dramas into her canvas, nor could she catch effects which were due to a plashing movement of water, or a long shimmer of celestial colour reflected from the sky upon the sea—supposed to be the easiest thing to do—but she could paint little nooks of gnarled wood and seem to convey the silence and mystery of the forest to her rendering. She had been told by an Academician that some of these oak stumps, with their lichens and mushrooms and their suggestions of lush greenness, with a cropping of deer and a feeding of blackbirds, contained high artistic merit. But she took it for granted there was no sincerity in what he said. Men, she had learnt, would say anything, if she smiled on them. They had no regard for the truth whatever, be they

English or Irish, much as the former prided themselves on their superior veracity. She had found no difference, agreeing in her experience with David, the poet, that all men, including Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen, are liars.

She did not greatly dislike them on that account, for they lied, the stupid fellows, to give her a little momentary pleasure, and out of gratitude to her because she was pretty and amiable. Still, Mrs. Lynch could not convince herself that she was an artist on masculine testimony only; she never received the least encouragement from female friends, who always regarded her efforts in that line with a patronising and magnanimous silence. Though she had no hope of becoming an artist in real earnest, such an artist as the Academician who praised her touch and choice of subject and what not; she still pursued art with enough of zeal to fill portfolios and to find amusement, when she was trying to think which, in reality, of the many suitors was to become her husband. The more she saw of Mr. Butler, the less she cared to think of him in that light, though to do him justice, he made himself as charm-

ing as his nature and person were capable of being, in the benignity of his attentions, and in the variety of his waistcoats and boots.

Now, however, that the fear of Morris being convicted of murder was dying out of her, and that she had seen Finn O'Brien successfully commence his tutorship, she felt the injustice of Mr. Butler insisting upon the promise she had so hastily made to him. After all, it was taking her at a great disadvantage to propose when she was in the excitement of salmon-fishing. Considering the small amount of encouragement she had given him, after the event, it said more for his perseverance than his good taste. Yet, some day she must marry again, she supposed; it was only a question of time: and there was an *embarras de richesses*.

To avoid some of the embarrassment, with a light easel under her arm, and a bag of sketching materials and sandwiches, she strolled into her park one day. She did not go out with any definite intention of sketching a particular aspect; but if anything struck her as more than usually pretty she might transfer it to her portfolio.

Very breezy and bright it was on the bend

of the slope as Mrs. Lynch followed the windings of her burn to the wooded valley beneath. How much there was for an artist to do here, she thought, as her eye filled with the light from the blue Atlantic and her ears caught the sounds of reapers among the yellow fields of her home farm. She rapidly went out of sight, however, seeing as she supposed a suitor's car rolling up from the lodge. She was in no humour to entertain anybody then. It was far pleasanter to be turning down the velvet green with her heel, to have the swallows hovering and twittering round her, to see the herd of red cattle lift their heads in gentle recognition of her, and to be alone for a time with her own thoughts. She had need to be alone, for she was not very happy. It seemed to her, as if her life had suddenly been filled to the brim with incident. Since the major's death, one event after another had been happening. First and foremost there was poor Captain Owen's accident, and the possibility of her boy developing into a homicidal maniac. Then there was all the love-making, and the necessity sooner or later to bring it to a conclusion by the choice of a husband. Then

there was that persecution of parsons that had determined her to become a Catholic. Added to which she had been unconsciously roused to a sense of responsibility in connection with the estates and the people who farmed them, though as yet she hardly knew what it amounted to and whither it might lead her. But she would resolutely try to find out before she married and keep on the way she had commenced.

Mrs. Lynch's was a nature capable of sustaining the burden of conflicting circumstances. She was essentially a strong, firm woman, beneath the mask of feminine fragility. But she had not felt so essentially fragile for a long time as she did, wondering whether, after all, her boy would be much the worse for firing a carbine and killing a man; whether she would like being a Roman Catholic; whether Mr. Butler, Mr. De Burgh, Lord Mountinnes, the Bishop, or Finn O'Brien would make the better husband; and whether her banker-agent in Galport was not more correct than she, when he insisted that reductions of rent were negative pearls cast before swine. She did not know what a negative pearl was,

though she knew its meaning in photography ; but that was what her banker-agent had called her reductions.

A number of things in the mind, with so mixed a bearing in life, is apt to quicken the footsteps of the body in which they are contained. Mrs. Lynch, from mere sauntering, bowled along through her park so swiftly that the cattle began to stare at her, and a halo of midges, who had gathered round her head, found it hard work to fly in time with her. For at one moment she felt herself to be the mother of an infant murderer, and then she almost ran ; at another she was kneeling at the confessional, pouring all her worldly troubles into the ear of an unmarried priest—a young, beautiful priest she pictured him, full of sympathy and with no knowledge of the world, except what he had picked up at the little wicket-window and out of ponderous tomes and folios ; again she was definitely making up her mind about the new companion of her journey in life, and somehow the young priest and the figure of Finn O'Brien blended themselves, and she saw herself traversing the primrose way with the Irish tutor—and, with love in her

heart, all her anxiety and responsibilities went off like a mist, and the clear light of heaven seemed to shine upon her.

At that point she became aware that she had wandered to the extreme limits of her park, that she was in the last little valley of elms and fir-trees, before the brook prattled under the common road-way and passed, beneath a bridge, into some other property.

The high, lichened walls, banked with laurel and myrtle, brambles and rose bushes, and an undergrowth of white-flowered, clinging green weed, brought her to a pause; when, stopping and looking into the stream, she saw at the bridge what seemed to her to make a good subject for a sketch. She sat at her easel and began to paint, and her canvas soon contained the hollow arch of an unlimed bridge, an arch so penetrating that the light did not come back from it, though a pair of robins did, and there were visible the rich green mosses clinging to its sides, and stony stalactites drooped from the roof. The details of the bridge and the brown running water and the foliage were easy enough—she had no difficulty in painting them—but, sitting on a round old boulder, was

a girl, neatly clad in the Irish costume of cloak and hood, napkin and red petticoat. Her, too, she might have painted; but just as she had begun to take her in her first meditative attitude, looking dreamily into the running stream, the girl rose, and with a rapid swing of her limbs, went higher up, and stooping, pulled a line, bringing ashore a full-bodied trout; went higher up still and repeated the operation, baited her hooks again, and sat down on the same stone. But, looking up, she saw Mrs. Lynch painting her. Mrs. Lynch smiled and nodded, and holding up her brush, encouraged her to sit down, for she had risen, startled, as one of the animals of the park might have been. She did not sit down, however, but looked dubiously into the darkness of the bridge and shrewdly along the margin of the brook, where the lines were placed. Evidently she was in a difficulty whether to pull her lines and run, or run without pulling them.

Mrs. Lynch resumed her painting.

"That is a better attitude than the other," said Mrs. Lynch, proceeding to put her in while she stood indecisive.

"I shall call you a water nymph," observed Mrs. Lynch, across the brook.

"I'm only a poacher," said Eileen, perceiving friendliness in the tone of the voice, "and sure it's not much I'm taking, only a few trout that'll never be missed. The widdy has plenty more." And Eileen, apparently forgetful of the artist, sat down on the stone again, and Mrs. Lynch had to wipe out the indecisive attitude and put in the meditative. She did it cheerfully, however, for the girl, she thought, was a very beautiful representative of her class, and she liked her because she showed a taste for the sport she herself liked.

"Who's the widow?" asked Mrs. Lynch, having at last achieved a posture in which the girl was fairly placed upon the canvas.

Mrs. Lynch came down to the water's edge, and leaping upon a stone asked Eileen for her hand to help her over. She got her hand and the pair were together, on the bank.

"What beautiful large trout you have got, to be sure. But why do you take them with the line and worm? It is much better fun fishing with rod and fly."

"Indeed, then, it's little time I have for fun,"

said Eileen ; " it's my father's dinner I'm looking to mostly."

" What is your name ? "

" I have various names. I'm known as the Princess of the Claddagh, because my father's King. Now what's your name ? "

" Oh, I am Beatrice. Beatrice is my name. You see I am painting. I have been lucky, I am sure, to catch a princess. It isn't every day one can come out into the woods and find a real princess. You look exactly like one, too, which is perhaps more remarkable. Does your father look like a real king ? "

" Yes, he's a great sailor, and knows all the holes and corners round about Ireland."

" Ah ! "

Eileen had been looking at Mrs. Lynch with a kind of startled attention, which did not escape the latter.

" Do you see anything strange about me ? " she asked, opening her packet of sandwiches.

" Far from it ; you seem so little strange to me that I might almost say you are the lad himself, only that you are delicater and gentler, and dressed like a lady."

" What a curious thing to say ! "

"Well then, and it's the truth, so it is. Your eyes and your mouth are just his eyes and mouth."

Mrs. Lynch's laugh rang through the valley of the brook.

"Girl, you are very, very far gone in love if you must put your sweetheart's head on everybody's shoulders you meet. How can I be like him? How is it possible, except on the principle that love is not so much blind as one-eyed, reflecting from the heart outwards rather than from objects inwards? In my profession—you see I am an artist—I have heard of men decorating rooms and churches and cathedrals with the face of the one they love. And I daresay if one knew the history of illustration in magazines and books, we should see plenty of artists' wives and sweethearts, looking out of them. But this is the madness of love, surely, to make me, a woman like yourself, wear his eyes and mouth."

"There's something you say there that I don't understand. But sure then it's the plain truth. You are as like to Captain Jeffery as a woman can be like to a man. I would say you were brother and sister."

“Ah,” said Mrs. Lynch, reflecting, and remembering that on the one occasion when she had met Captain Jeffery she had thought so herself, and had been, indeed, told so by Lord Mountinnes and Colonel Malcolm. But how should this Irish girl come to know him? Jeffery was no lover of her own, so she had no momentary revulsion of feeling as she asked her,

“Who is Captain Jeffery?”

“He’s”—and Eileen stopped to sigh—“he’s an officer in the army, more’s the pity; and we at the Claddagh supply them with fish,” she added rapidly, as she seemed to detect in the artist a consciousness that there was love between the officer and herself.

“Ah,” said Mrs. Lynch, “the officers know all the dark-eyed princesses, I daresay. Do you like men?”

“No—yes—no—yes—well, I couldn’t just say.”

“Ah, that’s how I feel. We have more tastes than fishing in common. I’m sure a great many men must like you, must love you, must have asked you to marry them.”

“Oh, the great big simples—they’re always

askin' girls to marry them. But it's in vain they'll ever ask me. See to the end of that line now; a big trout went up that way just now; you could tell from the running out and running in and the strain on the line, he's eaten the bait and gone further up."

"Perhaps it is that you have a lover—that you are mar—married already?"

"No, indeed, Miss Artist, I'm not married at all," said Eileen, remembering the country she was born to deliver, and the arms she had to distribute, and the great day that was coming for Ireland.

"But I'm not Miss, I'm Mrs.—I've been married, and have a boy of my own."

"Sure then, and it's not like a married person you are at all, with your careless ways of going on, and your curiosity and all and all."

"I'm a widow."

"Well, rest to his bones, I'm sure it's well rid of him you are, for you couldn't look so beautiful otherwise. And your boy must be but a very small one."

"No, he's a tall, wicked boy of eight years of age. He's a great trouble to me, and yet he's the dearest boy in the world."

“You all say that after you’ve had them. They’re just like the men—as uncertain as that trout trying the worm at the end of the line; you can never count on them. Now, surely it’s making sport of me you are. A boy of eight, and you can’t be so old as me, and I’m twenty, and couldn’t have had a boy of eight, if I tried.”

“No, indeed. But I’m more than twenty. Would you like to see yourself on my canvas?”

“I would, yes, if it was no bad use you would make of it, to give it to the police or the like of that against me. But, dear me! why should I say that; it’s no matter to me who gets it.”

“Would you mind my giving it to Captain Jeffery?”

“Would I mind? and is it spyin’ of me you have come from him? I thought better of him I did. Why should he send his sister after me? Tell him—yes, tell him that his love is nothing to me, no more than that;” and Eileen snapped her fingers. “I go free, I do—I have another lover. I go free, and see him never again.”

And forgetting her trout and her lines,

Eileen disappeared beneath the bridge. Sportsman like, Mrs. Lynch pulled the lines after a little, and threw in the trout with the rest in the cool spot, beneath the leaves, on the side of the bank. She baited the lines again and set them. The girl would be sure to come back, she thought, later on. How strange that she should persist in calling Captain Jeffery her brother! How odd that Captain Jeffery should apparently have made love to the girl!

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE ST. COLUMBKILL MOOR.

“ GIRLING, what sort of morning is it ? ” asked Mrs. Lynch anxiously from her bed, when her maid entered her room on the morning of the 12th, with coffee.

“ Slieve Innes, madam, has been burning all night. The tenants have fired the heather and there’s nothing on that side but smoke.”

“ Poor Lord Mountinnes ! he will not get a single bird. I’m so sorry. How does it look towards the bay ? Cloudy or clear ? ”

“ Clear, madam, as yet, but there are clouds in the direction of the islands. Gamekeeper says, madam, there may be wind, and the dogs will have hard work. Don’t expect much, don’t the gamekeeper to-day. Master Morris has been up for two hours, madam, practising with his gun. Killed the turkey-cock, madam, and sent a shower of balls into the dairy at the

home farm. Roberts, he was all over the place in his nightshirt. Never see anything like him, madam. Master Morris, he says he goes to Kumskill, madam, or he knows the reason why. Never see such a young master as he is, with his gun. But you couldn't but laugh, madam, at Roberts with his hairy legs and——”

“That will do, Girling. I am not interested in Roberts's legs, and you had better not think too much about them!”

“Law, madam! I only tell you what I see. And the gamekeeper, he see the turkey-cock killed, and the wind blowing on the shirt——”

“That will do, Girling; have they been busy with the hampers? Are they all packed?”

“Yes, madam, packed and on board an hour ago. Colonel Malcolm, his men has been sendin' down no end of things from the Barracks. And the gun-boat, madam, is just as red and yallow as if there was a Queen's Birthday with bunting. The postman see Captain Thorburn, madam, paradin' up and down his deck, from the end of the quay, in uniform, and a boat with six sailors and an officer

pulling backwards and forwards. You'll have a happy day, madam."

"I hope so, indeed, Girling. Have you everything ready for me?"

In her shooting costume Mrs. Lynch was conscious of a commanding style of beauty which hardly belonged to her in her domestic every-day wear. Her figure was the girlish curvilinear which suggested youth carrying itself amidst experience, and tightened in her masculine overcoat she showed the self-assertiveness of her nature, corrected by gleams in her hair which were feminine to a degree.

As she took the reins of the ponies at the door, having appeased Morris with a gift and a maternal salute, and drove through her park, she seemed the embodiment of healthy, blooming womanhood, audacious beyond the character of her sex, but her audacity justified by the responsibility which had fallen early upon her.

The round-coned Slieve Innes, on which her tenants and Mr. De Burgh's insisted upon pasturing their cattle and driving off the game, was, indeed, enveloped in smoke. Sandy, the gardener, was at her gate as she

drove out. He was looking pitifully at the smoke and flames.

"Madam, I houp no ill forebodes," he said in reply to his mistress's greeting. "I'm no very sure that something's no in the wind. They're a feckless, fushionless, mischievous wheen o' craturs; take gude care o' yersel, madam."

"All right, Sandy," said the widow, glancing at her gun-case, and disappearing at a rapid trot to the Galport harbour.

* * * * *

As the maid had said, a boat, with some of the smartest seamen on board Captain Thornburn's craft, was waiting at the end of the pier.

They saluted as she descended the steps crusted with mussels, and, feathering their oars prettily, started to the anchorage with great velocity.

Mrs. Lynch was the last to arrive it seemed; there were two professors' wives and the major's wife from the Barracks chatting on deck as the widow ascended. Professor Thomson was exposing Professor Dacy's ten-

dency to sickness, and Captain Thorburn was gallantly giving assurance that the trip over to St. Columbkill would be free of any roughness in the water. Colonel Malcolm was looking at his guns, assisted by Captain Jeffery, whom he had brought with him for the day.

The magistrate, who had been called out over-night to hear a poor man make his dying assertions about an assault which had been made on him by some neighbours with blackened faces, was busy washing himself in the captain's cabin.

There was a general odour about the ship of preparing breakfast, which suggested to the nostrils of the pleasure-seekers that sanguinary steaks and substantial ham, fresh fish, eggs, new bread, tea, coffee, and what not, were on their way to completion. Then Captain Thorburn lifted his little finger and the anchor was being got up, when it occurred to the widow to ask if everybody was there.

"Yes, the party's complete, Mrs. Lynch," said the magistrate, spying at that moment Finn O'Brien's figure on the end of the quay. "Bring that boat on board," said the captain, also spying the tutor; "we shall breakfast

now if you like, ladies. I am glad to say you all look like doing justice to it."

"Stop," said the widow, looking back at the quay and recognising Finn, "we are not all here. That is Mr. O'Brien, is it not?"

"A man who can't keep his engagements," said the captain abruptly, "has no right to his passage across."

Mrs. Lynch looked at her watch and assured him that he was ten minutes before the hour.

"The boat's on board now," said Mr Butler; "it would be exceedingly inconvenient to put it down again. See, we are beginning to make way."

It was only the fireman throwing out ashes, however, and some of the waste water going out of the pipes.

"Captain Thorburn," said Mrs. Lynch, with some asperity, "one of my guests is standing on the quay——"

"It's not that firebrand, O'Brien?" asked Dacy. "Good gracious! if I had supposed it possible he were to be here I should have declined the honour of shooting. I would indeed, Mrs. Lynch. There are reasons why

I should not give my support to that young man."

"I think he had better be ignored," whispered the magistrate confidentially.

The captain's little finger moved again, and the boat descended and brought Finn off.

"He is the one Paddy amongst us," said Thorburn, consoling himself. "And a 12th without an Irishman would be unlucky. But he's too deuced popular with the women, that fellow."

The women, certainly, made amends for the coolness of the men, for Mrs. Professor Dacy, who was not yet middle-aged, and had no great opinion of her husband, sat next Finn at breakfast and made figurative allusions to the bilious temperament of classical students, hinted that she liked dark-eyed men, said she was Irish herself, and hoped that some day Ireland would wear the green without any more hanging.

The breakfast was very heartily enjoyed, for the commander did his best for his guests. He had not even forgotten individual tastes. The colonel, he knew, was in the habit of

having a dish of porridge before going out to shoot, and such a dish he had prepared for him and the Professor of Zoology, with new milk of the morning. The fresh air had made everybody hungry, and one of the port windows being kept open just enough of it came in to increase the appetite of each.

The gun-boat went across the bay without pitching, and even Dacy had no tremors, though he quoted Virgil once or twice to give the meal a sea-flavour. On deck Finn established his position all round by his antiquarian knowledge. It was discovered that he had often been to St. Columbkille—a place visited by none but himself; and in a short time he was the centre of the group, as he pointed out its various features of antiquarian interest,

The Abbey was in the beautiful disrepair which connected it with the early centuries. As the gun-boat steamed into proximity, its ivied walls attracted a great deal of attention. It was built on a peninsula, lifted a little above the ripple of the tide by a shelving ridge of rocks; the starlings were flying out

and in the vacant windows; a crowd of kerns were hallooing on an open green space, past which the boats would have to row in landing for the moors. There was a great sound of barking dogs, too, which, with the sun lighting up the yellow corn patches behind the beehive huts, and the winding road showing grey on the mountain side, had an exhilarating effect.

Even Professor Dacy forgot his vow of ostracism against Finn O'Brien, and looked at him without being offensive, as he helped Mrs. Dacy down a ladder into a boat. The scene on landing was a little boisterous. The boats were run in upon a bright grey edge of shingle, and as they touched the edge, half-a-score of stalwart, red-cheeked, bare-headed, red-legged Irishmen seized the boats and ran them upon land. On the green bank, behind the shingle sat some score of women, of all ages, the young ones with babies in their arms looking fresh and pretty, the old ones with pipes in their mouths looking meagre and beggarly. But they all enjoyed the excitement, and, though they set up a common wail of want, and held out their hands, and

some of the ~~other~~ ones lifted their rags to show how destitute they were, there was not much delay in getting into the cars. Mrs. Lynch, the major's wife, and the colonel set out in one. Finn, Professor Thomson, and Mrs. Dacy got away in another. Mrs. Thomson, a large blanc-mange sort of woman, slow of motion, heavy, and desirous of never hurrying, got into a third with Professor Dacy and Captain Jeffery. Captain Thorburn, who had to look after the baskets, came last with the magistrate, in a car laden with food and ammunition.

It was not so easy to get through the village. Though Captain Thorburn had been fully half-an-hour in arranging matters with his men at the beach, when his car drove up the steep village street, he found a tumultuous crowd hanging about the cars which had preceded him. For a moment he thought of grape-shot and the necessity of a volley from the gun-boat, because he saw Colonel Malcolm's snowy head ascend above his car, as if in indignation. His hat was off and his attitude pugilistic. In another moment, however, he recognised that the colonel was

extracting the cork from a whiskey-bottle and administering drams to a group of farmers in the front rank of the swarming multitude. It was only an address of congratulation which had been read to Mrs. Lynch upon her first appearance among her St. Columbkill tenantry, and the colonel, exchanging greetings with the honest fellows who had presented it, drove away in front. It turned out, however, that the villagers had no mind to let any of the cars escape without exacting some tribute. Finn, being widely known among them, took it good-humouredly enough, but Professor Thomson, who had been talking *tetraonidæ* all the morning, blazed up when a new tribute of whiskey was being exacted. He had strong opinions about the "mere Irish," which it was hard for him to repress, especially as some of the female smokers from the beach had followed up and were again extending their palms. He thought it was rather too much when one beldame put out her hand and seized Mrs. Dacy's foot, and began to appraise the value of her serge.

"You are the veriest cannibals," cried the professor. "What! do you not see that we are

prepared^d for the moors, and that we desire to push on? Red Indians, Polynesians, have not half your curiosity and impertinence."

The only answer was a discordant and rather passionate outburst of Erse in all inflections. Captain Jeffery, in one of the rear cars, and Captain Thorburn behind, ostentatiously took out their guns.

"See," called out the professor, "in another moment a shower of that will be about your ears, you miserable, God-forsaken savages!" The crowd only laughed at him; there was no way of pushing through the mass of seething life of all ages which had come out to see. Even the pigs of St. Columbkille had joined the rout, and as the villagers charged and swayed and stared, they added now and again a squeak of agony.

Finn began to feel that it was an opportunity for a speech. He felt the wind of language rising in him, and was about to proceed with an oration, when a tall fellow in the crowd, member of No. XII., giving him a significant look, took the horse's head and led the car into the open road above.

It was a charming drive to the moors,

though a perpendicular one, between two ridges of overhanging hedge of thick bramble, serried hawthorn, and occasional overspreading of mountain pine. Looking back across the village and the Abbey, as the cars made the ascent, the bay and the inlet, with a film of haze on one blue expanse and a glitter of light upon another, spread various and laughing below. The noise from the village came up mellowed by the mountain air, and it was pleasant to look down on the gun-boat, still steaming at anchor, and boats rowing backwards and forwards.

“At all events there is no danger,” said the zoologist to Mrs. Dacy, who began to feel a little uneasy about her husband, “so long as a gun-boat lies there. Otherwise, I wouldn’t trust them much. What d’ye think, young fellow?”

Finn had got out of the car and was making the winding ascent on foot.

“No fear whatever,” said Finn; but at mid-day, when the two first carfuls had reached the moors, and, on a sheltered tableau of purple heath, varied by boulders covered with lichens, were waiting the arrival of the

luncheon baskets, it did seem as if something must have happened.

"They cannot possibly have gone back to the gun-boat," said Mrs. Lynch.

"Hang them!" exclaimed the colonel. "If they had only taken the trouble to diplomatised a little they might have brought their cars off in time enough. I rather think if we don't get into the blinds in the afternoon, we shall have no shooting at all. The wind has gone down, but it smells of fog, my dear madam. What do you think, Thomson?"

"I think that I'm devilish hungry again," said the professor.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mrs. Dacy from a boulder, "I see them—only Mrs. Thomson on the first car, the rest are walking. One of the cars has broken down; they are pushing it."

So it turned out. After a great delay in the village, only brought to an end by three crews of boatmen charging with their oars among the crowd, the rest of the party were allowed to ascend.

Mrs. Thomson had well-nigh given up the ghost with terror, and as she stepped off her car into the arms of Captain Jeffery, that

gallant warrior fell back upon the turf and bruised himself.

It looked a little ridiculous, and there was some laughter at the tableau—chiefly from the husband of the wife who had tripped, and it was with no very amiable countenance that the injured lady clambered up beside the baskets. Nothing, perhaps, restores good humour like a popping of corks in the open air and an opening of hampers. Even Mrs. Thomson regained her composure as she saw champagne cup preparing, under the hand of her friend the major's wife

Throned upon a rock, Mrs. Lynch, gun in hand, then remarked,

“Now I give you half-an-hour to empty the hampers. After you have quite done, we will separate into three parties and take our places at the blinds. The beaters have driven the grouse well up, and with a little waiting we shall, I fancy, make great bags. Thank you, dear, no cup for me. The air of this mountain side is more exhilarating—well, just one little glass of ale. I propose that Colonel Malcolm and Mr. O'Brien take care of me in the dreariest blind of all at the verge of the

moor, up among ptarmigans. Mrs. Major, dear, you will find Mr. Dacy and Captain Thorburn excellent company behind your blind. Professor, you will take care of Captain Jeffery, and Mr. Butler will join your blind and help Mrs. Thomson to load. Say, now, have I done the best? ”

“ The very best,” remarked Finn and the colonel, the latter striding off with an attendant and a couple of dogs, and leaving the young man to bring Mrs. Lynch to her place. They kept the colonel’s tall figure in view for some time as they crossed the moor behind him. The grouse, it seemed, had not allowed themselves to be driven impartially to the blinds. They had flown up-hill in a figure of seven, so that the colonel, who was the first to face them, was scattering feathers and bedewing the heath with blood long before anybody had begun. He had not gone to his blind at all, and it soon became obvious, from the gradual settling down of a snowy cloud on the summit of the mountain, that he was improving his time in view of the fog he had predicted.

Finn was in exuberant spirits ; he had to

give Mrs. Lynch his hand several times, as they descended the beds of rills and clambered up on the other side.

“I think it is too bad of the colonel—a little too overbearing and selfish—to press forward and kill everything, as if there were no one here but himself,” said Mrs. Lynch, standing upon a knoll of scrub and watching the birds, timid and swift on the wing, flying to the right and to the left and overhead that sanguinary officer.

“But we can do a little on our way to the blind,” said Finn. “See, the birds take it for granted that we have no aim; they are coming our way. Now, madam—now, Mrs. Lynch!”

The widow was standing with her eye upon the colonel’s smoke; he was himself invisible now in the distance; when Finn called, some birds fled up-hill within contemptuous range of her. She fired, and made a swift, pained exclamation, as a hare some ten yards off leapt into the air.

“Beautifully, beautifully done,” said Finn, rushing behind a pointer to secure the prize. “A lovely shot, madam, but if I didn’t think it was the birds you were firing at!”

When he came back, bringing the hare with him, about the size of a respectable sheep, the widow's gun was lying at her feet, and she, with her hand over her heart, was looking pitifully down the mountain. The hunting eagerness had gone out of her face; she was pale and shaky, and declined to look at the animal brought to her by her son's tutor.

"I—I—I had not thought that guns rebounded like that, Mr. O'Brien. I feel as if someone had struck me a cruel blow over the heart. Poor thing!" she added, looking down at the bleeding mouth of the hare and the started eyes in the sockets, "and I had aimed at birds flying, never so much as seeing you. Poor thing! leave me, Mr. O'Brien, and take the dead hare and put it out of sight. I am ashamed of it. And if you wish any shooting, join the colonel; I shall move on slowly to the blind. You can come to me there."

"Never," said Finn with vehement gallantry. "Never, madam, so long as I see you like that. You are quite ill; I will run back for something from the baskets for you."

Mrs. Lynch took her hand from off her heart,

gathered her composure together, picked up her gun, and replied carelessly,

“I shall think you had no right to be one of my party to-day if you don’t join the colonel, and make a bag.”

There was no misunderstanding her this time. She was indescribably ill and disgusted; but she was peremptory as well. O’Brien accordingly called off a dog and disappeared among the brackens and rocks, and was shortly consuming cartridges at a great rate all by himself, while Mrs. Lynch painfully took herself off to the blind.

* * * * *

Mrs. Lynch did not know how long she had been there. But it seemed to her she had reclined upon a rock for many hours before any one came to her. She had no sooner reached it than a white mist spread itself round her and enveloped her. All the mountain view was blotted out; nothing but wintry whiteness, which made her cough and feel that she might possibly die of exposure. It was a detestable situation. She could neither go up nor down, to the right hand nor to the left, for not very

far off there was a chasm, into which if she plunged, she would probably be picked up, weeks later, as dead as the hare of her accidental shot. The pain of the rebound of the gun was *gradually driven out of her by the depression* of the mist which clung to her garments and her hair. She shivered as she sat, her ears listening for a gunshot, as she strained her eye down the mountain, from the face of which the cloud had blotted everything out.

Mrs. Lynch was not timid, but she was fond of life, and it occurred to her that some hours of this kind of exposure, perhaps some days of it, might mean an end of life for her. It seemed a poor way of coming to an end, to sit shivering in a fog behind a bank of turf. And yet it was the nearest she had ever been to heaven, she told herself comically, and she tried to be resigned, and to shut out the pressure of responsibilities which began to weigh upon her loneliness. She had become rather cowed and serious, when a gunshot not far off sounded through the mist. She stood to her feet and cried into the mist,

“Which of you is it?”

“Me, madam, me,” said a figure, coming

out of it, and O'Brien slid down upon the blind.

"I'm so glad you've come, dear," said Mrs. Lynch, surprised into a tenderness she had never before revealed. "Have you been wandering about looking for me?"

"I have."

"And were you not afraid of the ravine, or did you know about it?"

"I was afraid of nothing but of your safety. Are you better? And do take—yes, you will undoubtedly take this coat round you. You are ice-cold."

Mrs. Lynch took the coat, and thought what a good fellow the tutor was. There they stood together for a long time, peering round the blind in hope of some fissure in the fog, and when there was none and no prospect of any, Finn began to talk of the estates, and the claimant who might arise for them at the Claddagh, and he asked her pardon for having tied up all the evidence in a mail-bag and sunk it at the bottom of Galport Bay.

It was late at night before the cloud dispersed, and when Finn and Mrs. Lynch reached the road where the cars had been, they were

gone. They saw the gun-boat, however, in St. Columbkille Sound, still at anchor, waiting for them.

"You have made me feel, Mr. O'Brien," said the widow, as she leant on his arm, "as I never felt before. If I am here on false pretences, and someone else is better entitled to the estates, I shall not continue to hold them."

"Madam," said Finn, "it was my adoration of you that dictated my conduct. Are they not better in your hands than in a fisher-girl's?"

CHAPTER X.

THE MAGISTRATE'S 'WOOING.

THE presence of Finn O'Brien at Mrs. Lynch's shooting party made it obvious to the magistrate that strong measures must be taken to suppress him. It was evident that she liked the lad, if indeed some stronger feeling was not at work within her.

Mr. Butler went up to Tasmania one afternoon, therefore, having decided to kill two birds. He premised that he would be more successful on this occasion than on the moors, where the report of his unsportsmanlike behaviour, he feared, had lost him some of the widow's good-will.

Mrs. Lynch was in her garden when the magistrate called. It had a rich glow of crimson, gold, violet, and pink in its various beds, which contrasted, within the high walls, strangely with the peak of Slieve Innes lower-

ing behind it. Mrs. Lynch was not doing much, only making a bead purse, as she sat upon a twisted seat of sapling in the corner of her garden.

The magistrate took some time to discover her. She saw him as soon as he entered the wicket, and hoped he would content himself with looking at the peaches on the south wall, without trying to discover her. Then he saw her and pretended not to, and *did* pause opposite the peaches, round which the golden wasps were darting in the afternoon rays. She went on stringing her steel beads, seeing the magistrate but not looking at him. The magistrate, knowing that she was capable of evading him, kept strolling towards her by devious garden walks, never turning his back on her in case she might escape.

He felt that he had been presented with a fine opportunity. There was nobody but a deaf old Scot, who was wheeling manure at the opposite end of the garden. It was just such an opportunity as he had longed for—Beatrice in her bower on a sunny afternoon and he the only suitor. Beatrice soon understood that she had been detected; the deviation of the

magistrate told her that he had seen her, and was diplomatically finding his way to where she was. Again, he paused to look at a cluster of peaches; when he resumed his walk she was gone. With the rapidity of Atalanta she had sped into a thicket of apple trees, pruned and arranged for shelter. The magistrate's heart beat as quickly as a middle-aged gentleman's heart can beat as he thought this act of coquetishness was intended for him. He knew there was no exit from the thicket of apple-trees; he remembered there was a very charming lounge, adapted for two, especially two who meant to talk of love. And though the magistrate had come to Tasmania with other business, he felt that it was now or never for love.

"Ah," he said, addressing the widow as if she were a little girl of eight who had been rather naughty at hide-and-seek, "I knew you were there."

"And what did you come for if you knew? Don't you understand that I am at home to nobody when I am here?" said Mrs. Lynch, breaking a thread and looking out of her bower with a glance of mischievous precision at the magistrate.

He affected a little sheepishness, which he hardly felt. He was wolfish at that moment, if anything. Now or never. The meaning of all these postponements must come out. Beatrice must explain. She must say when the day was to be.

He continued standing in the apple-tree alley, holding his left whisker with his right hand, vaguely conscious that there were wasps darting at him, but seeing Beatrice in all her attractiveness seated at the rustic table, stringing her beads.

"Now go away," said Mrs. Lynch, holding her purse upside down and putting a tag of steel beads to the end of it. "Go away, Mr. Butler. It's exceedingly hot and dangerous standing in that alley. See how the wasps collect about you. They don't mind me a bit. But I won't answer for them if there are two of us."

"Ah, the wasps," said the magistrate vaguely; "they take you for a flower, I dare say," he added, brightening up and venturing into the bower itself.

"See, they have left me now. There's more to be got among the peaches. Ah,

would you fetch me a peach, Mr. Butler? Not an over-ripe one. One still a little hard, with the pungency in it, and the juice not all turned to sugar."

"You shall have a peach, Beatrice, as reward."

"Reward for what? Do you mean to say that I am not to have it now? This is knight-errantry. Why, Mr. Butler, if Lord Mountinnes——"

The magistrate retired through a battalion of wasps, and was about to pluck some peaches, when a rapid footstep arrested him. He looked round and saw the deaf Scot approaching. "Come oot o' that, this minute," said the lanthorn-jawed, heavy-eyed gardener.

The magistrate had not selected the kind of peach he was to convey; seeing who addressed him, he merely turned to the wall again,

"D'ye hear what I'm sayin' t' ye? Come oot o' that."

"No cause for anger, Sandy," said the magistrate softly, accepting the irascible Scot as part of the difficulty of the position, as he stood on tip-toe to reach the lush, downy fruit.

"Damn it, sir, come oot o' that," said Sandy, striding irreverently through his own strawberry beds and seizing the magistrate by the coat tails.

Beatrice saw the whole scene through the lattice work of her retreat, and laid her purse and beads down to laugh quietly by herself. There was even more of comedy in it than she had anticipated.

"Leave go, you blockhead! I tell you I'm pulling these peaches for Mrs. Lynch."

"It's nothing to me," said the deaf Scot, hearing acutely, "wha you're pu'in them for. Mrs. Lynch is not permitted to touch them. Hands doon, man."

The order was accompanied by a severe tug at the magistrate's coat. It was rather too much from the representative of a nation which he hated at all times, but at this moment with a peculiar vehemence of irritation.

"Do you hear, lout?" said the magistrate, turning sharply round on the gardener, and making a speaking trumpet of his hands. "Peaches!" pointing to the wall. "Mrs. Lynch!" pointing to the apple-alley. "Go back to your muck, you wooden idiot!" he

added in a lower tone, with a gesture of his foot which Sandy ignored.

“If ye han’le another peach on that wa’, as sure as death, I’ll have recoorse to the only mishure that’ll stop ye.”

The magistrate turned viciously and dived at random among the fruit. Sandy again caught him by the coat, this time with so much backward force that he stumbled and went down, supine, among the strawberries. It was more than the gardener had bargained for. He seemed to feel, as he looked at the magistrate rubbing his haunches, one cheek red with strawberry juice, that he had travelled beyond what was permitted, even to him.

“Weel, lawyer, I’m thinkin’ you brocht this on yersel. But I will say that I had no intention of puttin’ ye doon among the berries. I houp you’re not hurted in any way. Hey, there’s the peaches that I alloo to be pooed at this saisin o’ the year. Ye see, peaches is like the Irish, they need management. An’ as I wouna interfere wi’ you in your coort, I expect not to be interfered wi’ on my own grund and wall-side.”

The magistrate picked himself up, took the peaches, and remarked, with teeth clenched and eyes glaring, in a low emphatic voice, "Of all the impertinent louts out of your loutish country, you beat them!"

The magistrate was, however, rewarded when he got back to the bower. The widow was almost tender in her way of addressing him. She said, "Dear Mr. Butler, I hope the peaches were within reach, and you did not need to climb for them."

"Oh, not at all. Only your gardener seems to think they belong to him. I shall have to horsewhip that fellow yet."

"We shall have to eat them inside," said Beatrice, impressed almost to laughter with the scarlet countenance the magistrate presented to her. "You have no sort of idea how you look. You are the most ducal looking figure—all strawberry. And so the wasps think. Allow me, Mr. Butler."

And, greatly to the magistrate's delight, Beatrice applied her soft handkerchief to his cheek, standing with her face at no great distance from his own. Lucky tumble! Useful lout of a gardener! Had it not been for

the state of his face he would have ventured to kiss her, as she stood.

"Now, we shall go in," said the widow, all too soon, and the rapturous moment was gone.

"Oh, I'm all right now," said the magistrate.

"Jam pot," said the widow over her shoulder, going out among the wasps into the sunlight, and down the garden to the house.

"I certainly was not a beauty," said the magistrate, with the shiniest of faces, half an hour later, having in the interval visited a mirror and washed himself in a basin.

"I never saw you look so sweet," said the widow mischievously, adjusting her blinds and curtains, and calling his attention to a couple of roes which had been introduced into the park, precursors of a flock, if everything went well.

"They'll escape over Slieve Innes and away to the south," said Mr. Butler, admiring them, and thinking that, in view of a marriage, a haunch or two of venison would be very well in their way. "Now, I will say what I came to say."

At that moment Finn O'Brien, done teaching, passed down the walk, and the widow smiled and nodded to him. It was an unfortunate cir-

cumstance. It put out of the magistrate's mind what he had meant to say first, and that was his idea of the date which would best suit their marriage. It substituted what he had intended to say last, and that was that the tutor must leave Tasmania, as bad weather was in store for him.

"Well," said Mrs. Lynch, sitting down and resuming her work at the empty purse.

"I regret to say it, but that young man has imposed upon you."

"How?"

"He has come here as a student of Galport College. Now Dacy told me he had never paid his fees. The lad is no student at all."

"It's a pity."

"And very far from being what he passes himself off for."

"He's an excellent shot, Mr. Butler."

"And his shooting is a disgraceful impertinence. You must know that if you turned your gamekeeper loose on the moor that he would kill far quicker than any of your friends. That young man—I have written to a colleague on the Shannon to inquire about him—turns out to be a rank poacher, well-known as

such in his own country. His connection with land consists in this: his mother, a widow, whose husband was shoved into the Shannon in a low riot, has about twenty acres on lease. This pretentious young blackguard held the plough before he came here, dug the potatoes, took the butter to market, and in the market of Kilcree got no small reputation for the quality of his shillelagh."

"I should have expected as much."

"A thorough low-born Irishman so far; but since he came to Galport his conduct has been much worse. I have long suspected him of connection with one of the brotherhoods who are tail-cutting, mane-clipping, strangling, carding, uprooting, shooting, stabbing ———"

"He must be very, very bad."

"He's so bad that I know for a fact he will be publicly, in the company of one or two others, expelled the college of Galport. When O'Gee was here he made a speech of the most inflammatory description. It was with the greatest difficulty I got him out of an apprehension, after that meeting. But that's of much less account than the secret goings on. Platform

talk is just so much gas. It goes into the air and gets blown out to sea. But if our information is correct, and I don't doubt it, the shebeen where O'Brien lives is the centre of an organization as wide as the West of Ireland. Half-a-dozen letters we have intercepted and opened at the Post Office enclosing money——”

“Ah!”

“It is so. ‘In love and war,’ you understand? And this is a war likely to be on no mean scale from what we can make out. The blackguards have got into the barracks, too, and begun their work on the soldiers.”

“Do you suspect Colonel Malcolm?”

“It's all dead earnest, Mrs. Lynch, I can assure you. If at this moment England were to go to war, Ireland would be in revolt from end to end, and the Indian massacres wouldn't be a patch on the blood they would shed.”

“About O'Brien, however?”

“Well, about O'Brien. I hold in my hands evidence which almost incriminates him in the murder of poor Captain Owen. Think of that, the murderer of your guest and friend, coming to teach your innocent infant.”

Mrs. Lynch dropped her purse, and put her hand upon her heart. She grew very pale, and said in a low voice, "If you would bring me a glass of water, Mr. Butler, it would be a service to me."

The water revived her. She regained her colour, picked up her purse, and commenced working furiously. The magistrate was not displeased to make so visible an impression.

"And now, Beatrice," he said, approaching with both hands extended, "I ask you only one favour before that day, which is to be of so much importance to us both, comes round. Tell your tutor to come back no more. In the exercise of my duty I am obliged to arrest him. I hope he may not be hanged, that's all."

Mrs. Lynch rose and said nothing. Morris looked in, and, seeing the magistrate, withdrew again. Mrs. Lynch sat down and said nothing, but looked fixedly at her persecutor.

"Mr. Butler, we have been going on too long in a false position. You exacted a promise from me under the most absurd circumstances—a promise to marry you. You have held me to my word. If you love me,

I am very sorry for you, for I do not—I cannot love you. I think it best to be frank. This is the last time I shall speak to you on the subject. As for my son's tutor—Mr. O'Brien—I have found him in all respects to my mind. He has not persecuted me. He has taught my child. If he feels any of the sort of thing you and others profess, he keeps it to himself. And be he serf or rebel, Mr. Butler, I shall respect his reticence. As for poor Captain Owen, you will allow me peremptorily to say that I know he had nothing whatever to do with his death. And to the foot of the scaffold, to the noose of the rope, I shall follow Mr. O'Brien if that charge, out of persecuting, paltry meanness is made against him. Mr. Butler, your love-making is at an end."

Mr. Butler retired quietly, but from what he had seen of the widow, he made up his mind that she was even better worth loving than he had supposed.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RAID.

THEY were troubled times about Galport. When night settled down upon the river and the bay no judicious householder showed himself at his own door. It was tacitly understood that something was about to happen, and the silence of alarmed expectation ruled everywhere. The leading articles of the *Constitutional Protestant* had received a new sort of frenzy from the bump which was given to the editor's head, on the great day of O'Gee's oration, and they predicted a rising in the West. All the country houses in the neighbourhood were watched by men in blue uniform, wearing bayonets. The only people who seemed to have an easy mind were the men from the ships, who went to and fro at the inns and public-houses when their day's lading and unlading was finished at the quays.

The American gentleman at the hotel was one of the conspicuously easy people, for he went about everywhere, kept the mouth of his purse open, and so openly asserted that his sympathies were with an Irish rebellion that the police paid no attention to him, judging him to be a harmless Yankee, who had sought out a place of refuge from gambling debts, or who, on sentimental grounds, had come over to Ireland to marry handsomely, and go back from whence he came.

It was in the midst of these apprehensions that the college of Galport was opened for its new session. There was much excitement among the students, for it was understood that something unusual was to happen.

A solemn inquiry had been held concerning the conduct of several of their members, notably the conduct of O'Brien, who had made an inflammatory speech. To this disagreeable ceremony the heads of the College had invited all the landed people of the district. But it was not known what was to be awarded to the culprits, the decision of the college dons having been kept secret.

The great hall of the College was crowded

on the opening day;—the arts professors ranged on side seats from a central table upwards, the professors of medicine gazing at them from a similar arrangement opposite, while the Principal, in gown, wig, and sash, sat ponderously in a chair in the centre.

It was his first appearance among them, and he said it was with pain he proceeded to discharge a most disagreeable duty, the most disagreeable duty that could fall to the lot of a principal, but one which he and his colleagues, after conscientious examination of proofs, were compelled to adopt. As a corporate body they had been assailed by a lad in the market-place, and branded with the name of charlatans. Nothing, he said, could be of less importance than the opinion of the young man in question upon any subject under the sun. Oh, he did know about potatoes and hens! (inclining his ear to Professor Dacy). Well, to potatoes and hens he was sorry to say that for some time he would require to devote his exclusive attention. He had proved himself to be no fit associate for gentlemen. He must leave the great capital of the West and betake himself to

other pursuits, for the decree of the College was that he be expelled forthwith. The name of the person in question was Finn O'Brien, of Ballybunion, Shannon.

Finn was sitting in the centre of the Annoyance Committee as the sentence of expulsion was read. He heard it with pain and surprise, for as he sat, he watched a little group of ladies in a corner, one of whom was Mrs. Lynch.

He thought he had never seen her look so glowing and glorious, her swift raillery and fun making the little circle round about her ripple and swell into inarticulate laughter. But as the Principal spoke, Finn observed her head droop, and he, who at the commencement of the proceedings had made up his mind to work hard at his Greek and Philosophy, obtain a good degree, and marry the widow, was now consciously the cause of her confusion.

Just such a look of pain and bewilderment she had given on the moors when the backward rebound of her gun had taken away her breath. This time, however, she had her comforter, for her son had thrust his hands

into hers, and exclaimed loud enough to be heard everywhere,

“It isn’t our Mr. O’Brien that the muff means. Blow me tight if I don’t——”

“Hush, darling”—and the Principal, momentarily interrupted, resumed his edict.

Rustication and not expulsion was reserved for three others:—

“We do not,” said the Head of the College, “propose to take you too seriously, Mr. Jones, Mr. O’Donoghue, Mr. Smith. We believe you to have lent your animal spirits to the lad who has now been expelled from our midst. But you must be aware that the manufacture of skulls and cross-bones in the present crisis of Irish history, and the posting them to persons in the neighbourhood, is no light matter. The reverend and venerable Dr. Howton, who preceded me in this chair, may be said to have lost his life by the suddenness of his emotion on beholding a caricature traced to the hand of Jones. And now that this disagreeable duty is discharged, turn we to the more pleasant duty of examining the programme of the coming session. I am told,” added the Principal, after a little

whispering, "that to the inquiry which has brought down upon them the sentences of expulsion and rustication, the young men add the insult of brazening it out. They are now in this hall. They must see the impropriety of remaining in this hall. A posse of constables stands without: they will be called in, if Finn O'Brien, John Jones, Daniel O'Donoghue, and Patrick Smith, do not forthwith leave this hall and the college precincts. I resume my seat until obedience has been enforced."

The Principal resumed his seat, and a couple of college janitors waited at the door till the culprits filed out. The emergency was one for language, but Finn's supply failed him as he looked at the reproachful face of Mrs. Lynch. He stood for a moment in the doorway, raised his right arm, and involuntarily put his left behind his coat-tails, and *ore rotundo* faced the college authorities. But still there was Mrs. Lynch looking at him, despondingly, tearfully he thought, and nothing appropriate would come. He only clenched his fist, and with a tragic stride went out after Jones and the Annoyance Committee into the quadrangle, where the posse

marched them to the gates and bid them be off.

Thus he finished his career at Galport College, and had all the book-learning which was to equip him for life. It was good-bye, he thought, to Lord Chancellorship, good-bye to all his professional aspirations. They had turned him out. Well, he would know how to repay them; and as he shook hands with the rusticated ones on the bridge, he straightened himself, thought of the banners and the sunburst, and his position as a staff-officer in the great invisible army of Ireland, and he shook off fear and determined to wait upon General Gorton to ask his instructions for the future. The general was not far off. Finn came upon him in the centre of the great square facing the hotel. Dressed in an ulster he was mounted on a car, and he summoned Finn to his side.

“O’Brien, we have been outwitted,” said the general, handing him a cigar. “Light up and look jovial. Yes—that will do. We have been outwitted. I am waiting to see them pass. They are coming out of the Barracks and pass to the station this way.”

“Who pass? There have been no apprehensions? Nothing has happened? You——”

“No cause for alarm, Captain O’Brien. They shall pass and I shall sit here and survey them. The —th is our regiment, I tell you, though they obey English officers. Our regiment, and the British Government knows it, and the British Government has ordered them off to the Bermudas just when they would have been of some use to us. I tell you what it is, O’Brien, ten days more of the —th in Galport and the West would have been up. Every mansion would have had its red flame through its roof. Take my word for it. Believe me——”

“For the love o’ God, sor, speak below your breath,” said the carman. The general had begun to “orate” from his car, without knowing it. He dropped his voice and continued, “Yes, the flames of the last of the landlords would have ascended to an indignant heaven, and Ireland would have been free. But here they come. Silence and cigars.”

No one had come out to see the regiment depart. It marched through a silent square, and it seemed as if there were to be no

spectators but the American on the car and the young Irishman smoking at his side. Though the band played briskly "The girl he left behind him," there were no lasses to be seen, looking on as company after company defiled to the station. Only two little incidents occurred. The members of company after company, unobserved by their captains, made as if to present arms at Gorton.

From the last company of all in the rear, commanded by Captain Jeffery, there were friendly shouts of farewell.

"God bless you, lads!" cried Gorton, through his smoke.

"Silence in the ranks," exclaimed Jeffery, who looked pale, worn, and black about the eyes.

"Silence it would have been for you, young man," repeated Gorton aloud, and the men passed on towards the station.

The second incident occurred there.

Eileen Conran stood at the railings of the square, leaning on a tree. There was nobody with her. She was weeping copiously. As his company filed into the station, Captain Jeffery darted across the road, seized her in

his arms, and strained her to his heart. For one brief moment she let her head fall on his shoulder, and he fled back again to his place.

“Do you believe your own eyes, Captain O’Brien? Do you see that? Do you not know that with a regiment in that condition, *our* men might have done what they liked?”

“But I’m afraid,” said Finn, “there’s more love than war in that. It’s the Princess of the Claddagh, and I’m thinking where she hadn’t given her heart she never would have leaned her head.”

Gorton laughed, a gigantic, derisive laugh, straight out from his chest, and said, “Boy, you don’t know that woman’s fidelity to the good cause. She would kiss the colonel and stab him in the back the next minute if it would serve Ireland.”

But Finn was not so sure of that, as he saw the girl turn down the square to avoid an incoming regiment, weeping as she went. The new regiment was on a bigger scale than its predecessor. Its men had more inches; its officers, newly returned from a tropical sun, looked as if they had just finished fighting tigers, and wore the blood-thirstiness of

demeanour appropriate to such encounters. Gorton eyed them from his car with doubt and misgiving ; when the last baggage-wagon had gone by, he heaved a great sigh, and ordering the carman to drive to Loughan, said,

“ Sisyphus, O'Brien, Sisyphus rolled the stone uphill and the stone rolled Sisyphus down again. But, Bigod, gunpowder wasn't invented in those days, or he'd have blasted it and carried it up in fragments. With the aid of gunpowder we'll overcome this difficulty too. But it's hard to have demoralised a whole regiment and then to find them sent off to the Bermudas without a word of warning, and to find substitutes like these sent over. But the day is not far distant for all that.”

Finn sat silent for a little as the car rattled along the road, and then told the general that his college career was at an end, that there was no prospect of his reaching the woolsack, and that now he did not know what should hinder him from going back to Ballybunion.

“ Give me your hand,” said the general, seizing it and slapping the youth on the back. “ This is just what you required. You required to be tried by the old fire of persecution. It

has ever been so with us. Nothing exists for us in Ireland. It is for the alien. When they see hope and promise, they cut it off at the root. But think of it, O'Brien, and never mind the jarvie, he is deep in the thing himself. This is just what you needed to complete you for the true work of your life, to make you the liberator of your people. Now you have no ties, you are ostracised from the professions, your career is towards the sunburst—make that the point to which you work. And as for Ballybunion, you're not going home to your mother just yet. I have something better in store for you than that."

As they approached Loughan they saw Mrs. O'Brien and Theresina sitting on a milestone.

Theresina rose and held up a warning hand. The police were in the shebeen it seemed; had taken possession a couple of hours ago; had ransacked everything and billeted four of their number upon the establishment. Finn was to go round by a back way to Father John's. The police would respect Father John's, and in his house he would learn everything.

It was late at night when Finn slipped out from the back gate of Father John's. No watch had been set on his premises, but he told the general that the details of a plot had been made public, that Finn O'Brien was unaccountably mixed up with it, and that already several apprehensions had been made. His advice was that Finn should take the packet back to Ballybunion and resume farming. If he would slip down the river after dark, he would get Michael Conran to put him aboard and the whole thing would be settled without him.

"One point of your advice, Father, we will take. We will slip down together, the young man and myself. But I don't promise you to send back Mr. O'Brien to the plough. Mark my words, he is a man that Ireland needs, and he isn't going to be thrown away on agriculture. We have other views, Father John, over there——" and Gorton pointed westwards.

Father John took Gorton's hand and shook it, with the remark,

"Don't communicate your views to me. But you have my sympathy and the prayers of the church. You are safe enough under my

thatch in the meantime. Get away, however, from apprehension as best you can."

When it was quite night, and the curlews were calling to each other on the further strands, the pair stole down the river's edge and unloosed a boat. The downward current from the Lough was rapid enough to take them to the sea, without rowing, if they only steered and sat quiet. They did sit quiet, and were whirled past the parapet of a castle and the quays of a distillery; they were well nigh capsized in the lode of a mill, and made some noise, which brought out a watchman's lantern at the upper window of a brush factory. Then they were safe; they had swept through all the bridges, and crossed the harbour bar without challenge.

"Don't forget the gun-boat," said Finn, as the general began to use his voice again. "The water is a little rough and white out here, but if we hold straight out we can row back under Michael's window."

They pitched and tossed for some time outside the Claddagh, and presently came to the mouth of the Tasmania brook. Finn stole to Comran's door and listened. No sound but

the spinning of a wheel. He peeped through a window. No one but Eileen Conran at work with her flax and her distaff. He opened the door and went in ; Eileen neither turned nor spoke.

"Miss Conran," said he, after a pause, "where is Michael?"

She laid aside her flax and distaff, rose and confronted him. How desolate and heart-sick she looked! Was it Jeffery or the cause which touched her heart?

"I know all, Mr. O'Brien. They have been here twice. A picket of soldiers and the sub-inspector with a dozen of his men. Even now they are not very far away. You know your way out by the nets. Thanks be to God that all the guns and the pistols and the powder have been distributed! That's a footstep. Run!"

Finn ran, but it was only the general. In the interval he had divested himself of his ulster, and he came into the light in the uniform of the general officer known to Finn. He certainly was a formidable-looking figure, and Eileen and Finn involuntarily stood round in silence. He gave them the impression on

the spot that there was nothing which might not be achieved if he gave the word of command.

“Princess,” he said, in a voice which was so unlike his haranguing voice that Finn had to scrutinise him keenly to realise that he was really the friend of the earlier part of the day — “Princess, you know that I have foreseen all this. You know I will see to it, when the day of liberation comes, that you will have your reward, your very sufficient reward. But you must do without the captain” — Eileen started and looked wildly about her — “Captain O’Brien of my staff—for one little month.”

“Oh yes, yes, yes,” said Eileen, wringing her hands, and thinking of another captain, who had left her for the rest of his life, she thought.

“And, Princess, you must do without the King of the Claddagh.”

“I know it—I know it. Oh cruel, cruel!” and Eileen buried her face in her hands.

“The king and O’Brien, as you know, take their orders from me. I take my orders from a dozen millions of the Irish race over there in the West. And the Irish people beyond

the seas delegate me, General Gorton, to command Michael Conran and Finn O'Brien to provision and go to sea for one month."

"The hooker's at anchor at the mouth of the stream," said Eileen simply; "my father is below. I will stamp on him."

She went to the trap door and stamped, and presently Michael appeared, dressed in his best, with the dramatic determination that if he was to be taken to prison he would be royally habited as the best pilot of the West. Eileen repeated what the general had said, and an hour later, when the girl put lights in her window, the hooker, duly provisioned, was on its way outwards to the deep sea.

The general, before sauntering to his hotel at midnight, stood beside the girl for a little and asked, "Do you love O'Brien?"

"I am willing to work in the same cause with him?"

"You do not love him?"

"I love my country."

"You are heart-whole then?" and he took her hand. He was old enough to be her father. She allowed him.

"I am tired and sick."

“But you will never betray the cause?”

“Do I not know my oaths? and would I betray my own father?”

“Then you will never give your heart to an enemy of your country?” The general was standing looking at her now.

“Leave me—leave me!” said the girl.
“My poor heart will answer for itself to the heaven which is above all.”

CHAPTER XII.

EXILES.

MICHAEL CONRAN's hooker had been a month at sea—rather more than a month, having hung about the coast of Ireland from Galport to Cork, and being chased out from inlet to inlet by Custom House officers.

Finn had sunk into a state of deep despondence, which was irritating to the King of the Claddagh, who, reviving old habits of seamanship, rather enjoyed his compulsory voyage. The lad saw it in a more sentimental light than the king. For a time he was sustained by the feeling of martyrdom. He felt that he was one of that glorious army of patriots who had been driven from their fatherland by an unjust Government. For a week, so long as the hooker was running through the rollers of the Atlantic, he was very ill and useless, not able to give Michael more than an occasional blink of sleep, as he

sat at the tiller. But amidst his sickness, the pride of being one with the band of exiles who had been hunted from their country sustained and supported him. He began to lose his elasticity, however, when morning after morning he wakened up with the dull environment of cold vapour and plains of moving azure.

Patriotism, ennobling as it was, seemed rather costly at the price of so much discomfort on a cold and hungry sea. Besides, as the weeks wore by, he found that his love for the emancipation of his country was much mixed up with his love for Mrs. Lynch. Many and many a time, as Michael slept at the bottom of the mast with his feet upon the stove, Finn cast up the figure and face of his dear mistress. It soothed many an hour in the run across a chopping channel to think of her in all the attitudes he had seen her, since that eventful afternoon when she engaged him to teach her child. He thought a great deal more of her than he did of his mother, whom he remembered with a sort of luxurious regret, as part of that problem of patriotism which was so much to determine his life.

The hooker had been finally chased from the mouth of the Ilan in the south of Ireland, but not before Finn had been ashore at Dunashad Castle, and seen a newspaper in the neat parlour of the inn, from which he gathered that apprehensions were being made all over the West and South of persons suspected of sympathy with the secret societies.

He brought the newspaper to Michael, and read to him an account of arrests made at Loughan—none of them, as it turned out, members of No. XII.—and it was remarked at the same time of the Claddagh that, for the first time within the memory of man, it was supposed that the fisher people were allies of rebellion. That was all, however.

* * * * *

The hooker had been five weeks on the sea; they had sailed away from Ireland, and Finn had begun to wish he were dead, and to care nothing about patriotism, his mother, or Mrs. Lynch, in the general sense of numb hopelessness which had got into his blood and being. He believed that Michael had lost his way on the sea, and when their stock of potatoes was exhausted, that they would

starve. He cared very little whether they starved or not, so permanently drenched was he with the malignant sea, so heart-sick had the last fading horizon of Ireland made him. "Michael, where are we?" he would say once or twice a day.

"Sure then, Master O'Brien, I know where it is that we are. Look at the ships and keep up your spirits. Isn't it to a haven they are sailing? And where other would I take ye?"

They had been out of sight of land for many days, and were well tossed and blown upon, when Finn, who was half asleep and hoped he was dying, one evening was roused by a faint sound, he thought, of music.

Music? Was he, then, about to earn the reward of his devotion to his country? Music? Was the heavenly choir going to take him straight to paradise, and was purgatory after all only this dismal time, on the chopping sea?

Yes, it was music. He heard its strains floating with the wind, over the sea. He roused himself. He was not yet dead. He ~~leant~~ on his elbow and called to Michael,

“Take her out of the wind for a minute and let me listen. Do you not hear it?”

“I hear nothing but the wind in the mast and the waves at the bow,” said Michael, who had a roasted potato in his cold right hand, and who felt very unlike entering heaven.

“Above the keen of the wind, Michael, I hear the sound of harps. Yes, of harps, and harpsichords, and brazen instruments. Now it’s gone. Take her out of the wind again, never mind the spray. Yes, music, and it’s over the water it comes to me—dance music, some of it, church music, march music, all united together.”

“Bhoy, bhoy,” cried Michael, fixing his tiller and throwing himself beside Finn, “it’s not doying ye are! Don’t say it is. No, no, no. Put some o’ them warm pittaties inside your sleeves and your coat. Christ! but the ship’s going away and no one at the helm! Finn O’Brien, it’s not leave me you would in the sea all by my lone self, and me out of my reckonin’ entirely, entirely.”

“Go back to the tiller, Michael, and keep her still out of the wind. I’m only weak and exhausted. But the music is still there. What

can it 'be? Listen, Michael. There is the service of the mass—how should it be flying over the waves with the blare of martial brass, and the nimble fall and rise of the violin? Michael, where are your ears—it's music everywhere, from the very tips of the waves to the horn of the crested moon—the vault is full of it."

"Lights, me bhoy. Lights! Holy Mary, what a shore for lights! Blue lights, red lights, purple lights. Heard ye ever of a place in the worruld, Master O'Brien, with such a shore? "

The hooker swept into easy range of the lights, and Finn, now fairly roused from his prostration, leant out of the bow and gazed upon as mingled a phantasmagoria of fiery colour as any shore could present. From point to point, behind a ridge of breaking waves, there were explosions of coloured fire; here and there great bonfires blazed and sent their forked tongues high into the air; miles of lanterns seemed hung out in space, and shone, golden, cerulean, blood-red, and emerald, where they hung. There were myriad lights twinkling in windows, and above the roar of

waves and wheels, and the cry of mobs, all inextricably blended, were heard the mass, the march, the dance-music of the organs, the brass-bands, the violins.

“Michael, it’s Spain you’ve carried us to. We’re in the Mediterranean, and it’s a great Spanish city we’re lookin’ at. You’ve crossed the Bay of Biscay and never knew it. I feel like life again, old friend, and surely for you and me there’s some protection in there, from the tyrant England.”

Michael answered by letting out his anchor ; it took about half-a-dozen fathoms to bring the hooker’s chain to an end, and they swung round facing the lights and the uproar.

“I’ll go ashore and find out where we are, Michael,” said Finn. “Nothing would revive me quicker than that.”

“There’s a surf in there, bhoys, that might drown you ; but I don’t think it’s very deep. I’ll take ye in the dingey myself. And don’t stay long. I think it’s France we’re on, now.”

Finn was rowed through the surf, and the dingey, rolled high up on a shingle beach, was nearly swamped with water.

“I’ll wait for you,” said Michael, “and do you go up and find out.”

Finn wandered up the beach in the half light of the evening. Michael overtook him, and putting a pound-note in his hand, said, “Finn O’Brien, it’s me that’ll drink health to France or Spain, or wherever it is we are, if you’ll fetch down the potheen of the country and as much bread as you can carry. Don’t lose your way, now, for it’s a great city it is.”

Finn resumed his way up the shingle, and passed through a crowd of wooden huts, approached with steps. They were bathing coaches, but Finn thought they were houses, shut up for the night because their inhabitants had gone to bed. He wondered if they had Curfew Acts on this shingle shore which compelled some people to shut themselves up before others. Then he passed through a group of capsized boats, and ascending a stair stood bewildered among the sounds and lights, the rushing vehicles and the crowding people. It was not Spain, then, nor France; it was England, to judge from the voices of the people. He joined the crowd, unnoticed, and took the direction it was traversing. He heard

only one subject discussed—Guy Fawkes, Guy Fawkes, everywhere Guy Fawkes. To Finn Guy Fawkes was one of the consecrated heroes of history; he wondered what it was that made them discuss him so much. But the English was such bad English that he could make but little of it; it was a loud, shrill, broken-worded English, as unlike as possible the educated brogue of his own dear West. They arbitrarily put beginnings to words and cut off beginnings to words which he, dictionary bred, knew to be vulgar and wrong. Yet they were undoubtedly English.

He was borne along with the stream of the people on a broad pathway, overlooking the beach. It was lined with carriages, and the coachmen offered them for him. They would be the cabs he had heard of. On the further side of the street, in the light of splendid windows, another crowd, more gaily dressed, more orderly, were sauntering in the same direction. There was too much light on the other side, or he would have gone over, for he felt his gorge rising against the cries of "Guy, Guy, Guy," which he began to think were directed against himself. For he was head

and shoulders above the crowd, and though he did not know it, he looked haggard enough to have come out of a subterranean cellar where he had been firing gunpowder. Then he felt an oppressive hunger come over him, and at a crossing he went over the street, after vainly waiting for the flow of conveyances to stop. He was more amazed than ever. It was a city of palaces. He feasted his eyes at a jeweller's window. Heavens! there was treasure enough behind the panes to buy up all Ireland. He looked in a window where a colony of turtles were tumbling over leaves of lettuce and swimming in an artificial tank. Behind the tank there was a long saloon, brilliantly lighted, with tables glittering with silver and plate. Ladies and gentlemen sat at them and dined. He pushed the door open and went in. A heavy odour of rich soup steamed into his nostrils and nearly sickened him. The rubicund faces of several of the gentlemen looked at him with silent surprise, and one of them, after twisting an eye-glass from an expanse of shirt and scintillating studs and applying it, looked to the waiter, muttering, "Guy Fawkes."

Finn stood for a moment bewildered, as if he were in a valley of diamonds, so strong were the crystal lights and the mirrored reflectors. "How much would a dinner be now?" asked Finn, recovering himself, as a menacing waiter, with a towel on his arm, approached and scrutinised him.

"Scraps given at another door. Up the lane to the right. Get 'em for nothing in a couple of hours."

Finn was a little faint with the smell of plenitude, and the waiter's allusion to scraps fired his soul.

"Fellow, I see a friend of mine dining at one of these tables—the member of Parliament for Sherryderry. Let him know—no, I will let him know myself. Mr. O'Gee, how do you do?"

It was indeed the great leader and patriot, sitting behind a pheasant and swallowing champagne. Very rosy and resplendent he seemed, as unlike the advocate of a starving nation as man might look. But Finn greatly mistook his man if he thought that he would be recognised in a shining saloon of that sort. The member for Sherryderry was not the only

Parliament man present. And the spectacle of the shivering Irishman, splashed to the hips, a patch of tar on his right cheek from his contact with the ballast, his hat squashed and tumbled, and his dark eyes starting from their sockets with the eagerness of hunger and indignation, was not encouraging. The waiter, hearing the member for Sherryderry addressed, made no objection to Finn approaching his table, though the whole waiting staff kept their eyes on the spoons.

"Mr. O'Gee," said Finn, "is it Spain or France? What is the soil I am standing on? What is the city? And are they friends or foes?"

Mr. O'Gee was too practised in the recognition of faces not to know who Finn was. And if he had not recognised him, he could not fail to distinguish the mellifluous Western brogue.

"This is no place to come and speak to me," he answered, chewing his pheasant, and taking a camellia out of a flower vase and placing it in a button-hole. Finn made a signal from No. XII., but to no effect.

"Look at yourself in that mirror and you

will see whether you are in a fit condition to be here," said O'Gee.

Finn looked, and crestfallen, seeing the image of himself, he was retiring, when O'Gee, making the beaded bubbles of his champagne wink anew, filled the saloon with his voice—

"That you are Irish I make no doubt. But that you are a lunatic I also make no doubt. My only hope is that you are an innocent lunatic." And Finn slunk away. The sea air again restored him when he reached the street, and again he was borne along with the driving crowd of pleasure-seekers.

The fanfare of the trumpets was louder than ever; men turning handles in mahogany boxes touched all kinds of chords; niggers with trombones danced in front of the lights; fiddlers with dogs crooned low at the pavement. Everybody was amused and happy, he thought; hungry as he was, and insulted as he was with O'Gee's cool affront, he could not help being a little amused by the variety himself.

Off the main street he saw men going in and out a public-house. He remembered

Michael thirsting for potheen on the sea-beach, and entered. At the counter a girl hardly in her teens was holding a glass of gin to the lips of an infant which seemed as if it had been but a few days in the world. Finn was divided between pity for the little mother and avidity at the sight of a great corner of veal and ham pie under a glass cover. His avidity fairly overcame him; and lifting the glass he removed the corner of pie and stood devouring it, while faces peered at him from opposite counters and winked at each other.

“Did you say a glass of bitter?” asked a barman.

“A glass of whiskey,” said Finn, “and a bottle for me pocket.”

Whereupon there rose laughter at the other bar windows, and Finn heard himself described as a wild Irishman, as a Guy Fawkes, and several other things which he was too hungry to resent. The pie was the most exquisite thing which had ever descended his throat. He was not half done with it, before he felt the glow come back to his cheeks; and the observers at the other counters, seeing fun, in

the returning joviality of his face, nudged each other to watch him.

"Isn't it a small piece of this pie you'll take from me?" said Finn, looking pitifully down at the infant and its infantile mother. "I regard it as the best-cooked pie I ever tasted."

"Oh, we ain't to speak to anybody in Brighton, baby and I. Father, he's just gone round the corner, and we ain't to speak. Brighton's a wicked place. No, I thank you, sir, no pie for me."

It was Brighton, then, the great watering-place, that Michael had made, Brighton, the playground of London, of which he had heard a little.

"They've got a guy nigh as big as I am, and they're goin' to burn him off the East Pier, Mariar," said the little starveling's father, an undersized, beardless boy of sixteen or thereabouts, who had just come in.

"I didn't speak to nobody" said Maria, "but the genlm'n offered me a bit of his pie."

The young father's head did not reach Finn's elbow, but spitting on his hands, he called out, "Speak to my wife again, and see if I don't make your claret spout."

"It's me you're addressin'?" said Finn.

"None o' that," shouted a barman. "What's this, master? We don't know that paper here."

He was looking at Finn's pound note.

"It's as good a pound," said Finn, "as ever the Bank of Ireland put its stamp to."

"I don't take it," said the barman, tossing it down again. "T'ain't money in this town. You give me English money now. You know better than offer that here. Sharp about it."

Finn had no English money; he had nothing but his Irish note, so contemptuously treated behind the bar.

"You don't say that the money is bad, do you?" asked Finn.

"I say nothing but that it don't pass here."

"Well, then, I've never a penny to pay you with but that same."

"Come, if you don't pay for your veal and 'am and your whiskey, there's a man in blue outside 'll ask you the reason why."

"But, sir, this is the merest tyranny of ignorance and superstition," said Finn, feeling warm and full and rhetorical. "A pound note of the Bank of Ireland is good for gold just like a pound note of the Bank of England."

“Dry up,” said the landlord; “we want no sedition here.”

“Let me shee the note,” exclaimed a jewelled gentleman from an opposite compartment, revealing a gigantic beaked nose and a pair of glittering, beady eyes. “Sho help me, I’ll buy it as a curiosity. How much does he owe you?”

“Veal an ’am, glass-whiskey, bottle of whiskey in his pocket—half-a-crown,” said the barman.

The beaked nose and beady eyes looked into the pound.

“Sho help me, heresh a crown for it,” and the ringed and jewelled one deposited a five-shilling piece.

“Is it a bargain?” asked the barman.

“Hand me the crown,” said Finn in a melodramatic royal manner. And, as he pocketed the change for it, the note of the Bank of Ireland went into a purse among other notes.

He shut the door upon loud laughter, and went back among the lights and music and the sea-breeze. He had regained all his elasticity. When he went among the multitude and was

pushed, he pushed back again. When he was called "Guy" he replied "Spalpeens," until, remembering Michael, he shook himself free of the mob and descended to the shingle and the breaking waves. For some hours he wandered, searching for Michael, but neither man nor hooker were visible. He noticed that the wind had risen, and that the surface of the sea was troubled as it had not been when he was rowed ashore. No Michael, no hooker! Had man and hooker disappeared then? Had he sailed away? Tired and alarmed, as the evening wore on, he ascended the steps of one of the wooden huts. The door was open. He asked if he might come in. He got no answer. He entered and found two empty wooden chambers; in the inner chamber a warm carpet was spread. He lay prostrate upon it, and was presently fast asleep, with his tired head upon his elbows.

CHAPTER XIII.

FATHER JOHN AND MRS. LYNCH.

TASMANIA became a very spiritless and dreary house after the raid which expelled Finn O'Brien. Mrs. Lynch would see nobody. She believed in her heart that it was all a County Club plot, and her indignation was so great that she ordered the constables off her policy, and the red-coats, who, as usual, had been sent in from the Barracks for protection. She would no more have anything to do with protection, she said, and in a fit of sympathy with her backward tenants, she gave orders at her bank that the "hanging gales" of rent were all to be forgiven. It was in vain that Lord Mountinnes brought the new colonel up to see her. They were welcome to sit in her drawing-room, they were welcome to try for a buck at St. Columbkil if they liked, but Mrs. Lynch was not to be seen.

The County Club put itself to a great deal of trouble about her. The new officeriate was dying to see her; and the magistrate, triumphant but alarmed, called every day, sometimes twice a day, without however achieving anything. Mrs. Lynch would not be seen. Was it ill health then? And would Dr. Alleyne be going over to her? Or the bishop?

To all which queries, the single response was given that Mrs. Lynch desired to have retirement, and in the meantime could see no one.

The truth is she sat all day in her boudoir, looking out upon the summit of Slieve Innes, seeing as in a dream the rooks wheeling among the trees, and the variations in the sky from morning blue to afternoon red, and scudding of clouds.

The scudding of the clouds pained her, for she suspected that O'Brien was on the sea, and though she would not admit that she deeply loved him, she experienced much discomfort in the region of her heart.

During these days of retirement Morris was a good deal out and in. His mother tried

to remember all she knew of fairy stories, especially those with a moral in them; but her talk became so atrociously serious that the boy forsook the boudoir altogether, or only came to the door of it to waggle his ten fingers at his nose and retire, shouting.

The seriousness of Mrs. Lynch may be gathered from a note which she sent to the parish priest of Loughan. It ran :—

“DEAR FATHER O'CLERY.—I have heard much of you from my friend Mr. O'Brien. If you would come to see me any time that would suit you I should be glad to listen to your representations in behalf of your Church. I need counsel, and know not where to look for it.

“Very truly yours,

“BEATRICE LYNCH.”

It had been coming to that for a considerable time—longer than Mrs. Lynch suspected. Not that she had experienced what in theological circles is understood to be an awakening of her soul. She knew, perhaps, less about Church theories and the relations of individuals to another world through the medium of religious organization than any woman in Ireland. Major Lynch had not been a man who troubled himself about these

things, contenting himself with Protestant pews and subscriptions and non-attendance. And as long as the major lived, Mrs. Lynch had not felt any great necessity for a nearer approach to a life in conformity with Church ideals. She was surprised at her own precipitancy when she really knew that Father John O'Clery had been searched out and the letter put into his hand. She was even more surprised, however, when, seated at a little cabinet in the dark, with tapers dimly burning in bronze sockets, and a waft of the scent which was rather from the bottle of sorrow than of pain floating from her curtains, to hear the priest announced from the door.

Father John, true to the importance, as he took it, of the letter, had lost no time in robing himself and setting out for the capture of the strayed lamb.

The consequence was that Mrs. Lynch, who had gone back to the garments of her widowhood, and who stood up, the very frills at her throat and wrists seeming to carry penitence in their appearance, pale and agitated, rather quailed at the sight of him.

Withdrawn for a week or two from out-door

life, the widow's nerves were keener than usual. She had not thought of Father O'Clery as a small, pot-bellied man, with aggravated red cheeks and a pronounced odour of spirits. Such he was, however—quite pot-bellied and secular and indubitably smelling of Irish whiskey. The widow did not know how her devout aspect touched the priest. Used to rough mountain work and the performance of the offices of his Church within reeking huts, it seemed to him as he entered the boudoir, and saw the ruddy bronze of her hair, and the pale speechlessness of her face, that here was one who had some kinship with the saints—nay, even with the Mother of God herself.

He put his shovel hat over his left breast and bowed to her with so much natural dignity that Mrs. Lynch presently saw in the mud upon his gaiters, and the blowsiness of his face, only an indication of earnestness in his Church work. She had a dim feeling, too, that priests had to drink a good deal by way of duty at the altar, and before they sat down facing each other on either side of the fire she recovered her first shock. Besides, as he

spoke, he impressed her with a certain quality of soothingness in his voice, and his language, like O'Brien's, flowed from him as if in inspiration. He neither stopped, nor hesitated, but talked with an unctuous evenness of expression which was allied to music. He talked of matters indifferent to both of them for some time, and then, altering his tone, said that he gathered from her letter that the Holy Spirit was working in her. The widow gave a slight sigh of relief. He was not like the Protestant bishop at any rate, nor the Kensington curates; he was not going to spring the mine of a proposal upon her. There was passionless celibacy written in every feature of his face, though it was blowsy and red and round.

"I am not a religious person, Father O'Clery. I am afraid I have not the least touch of the Holy Spirit about me. But I am not satisfied with myself. It is now years since the major died, and I have my son to bring up, and the estates are a great responsibility, and I cannot keep men from proposing marriage to me, and I am in truth very miserable about everything. I sometimes wish I had never married

at all, and had been sent to a nunnery in early youth and kept there until I was quite an old woman."

"We do not, happily, always know when the Holy Spirit is working in us," said the father, "and I discern in your very weariness with the world's ways a desire for the consolation which can only be truly found within the bosom of the Church."

"How could it help me?" asked the widow.

"What is your trouble?" responded the father.

The noise of a rushing wind, which had been distilled on the heights of Slieve Innes and the mountains beyond, enveloped the house. It moaned drearily among the elms in the summer garden, and shrieked among the nooks and crannies of the mansion. The panes rattled, the curtains were puffed, and the tapers swayed. The widow rose in evident distress, and leaning her brow upon the glass, looked into the whirlwind.

"It comes from the mountains," she said, turning to the priest, "but it has been blowing from the sea for weeks, and the roar

of it has been coming to me day and night. Father O'Clery, have you heard anything of my friend, Mr. O'Brien?"

The priest had heard everything. He knew that Michael and Finn had gone to sea. He had been anxiously looking at the papers to see if they had landed anywhere further south and been captured. But it was the Church and not Finn O'Brien he was serving in this boudoir. He thought only of the Church, and if Finn O'Brien could be used as a means of bringing this beautiful Englishwoman into it, good and well. But he almost smiled as he thought of the widow's evident love for the lad and her talk of a nunnery.

"Poor young man!" he said, "he has been born into a troubled time, with susceptibilities likely to carry him into strange places. Mr. O'Brien is an Irishman before everything, madam, and I am afraid we must say that he has been interesting himself in the liberation of Ireland—hopeless object! I still entertain the opinion, however, that when this little gust of English temper is blown away, and quiet has been the result, we will have Mr. O'Brien restored to us also."

“You do not know what has come of him then?”

“Madam, I have no knowledge of the young man’s movements; but I believe that a man who goes by the title of the King of the Claddagh, and who was suspected of nothing, has disappeared along with him. If they are together they are safe; for Michael Conran can read the coasts of Ireland as I read my book of offices. He is an experienced pilot, and you may take it that O’Brien is in good, strong hands. I am sure it would greatly modify any hardship the young man might have if he were aware of the interest you take in him.”

“He knows that I must take an interest in him. One must always take an interest in a person who has risked his own to save one’s life. Mr. O’Brien dared to grope his way among precipices to come to me on the 12th of August, and I shall always consider that I owe him my life. Of course I am grateful—and I think so much of him that I am sure the professors at the College have done him a deep injustice in expelling him. What if he *did* use some strong language on a platform? It was of course very honest and downright to

describe them as a set of charlatans. But they might have remembered that he was Irish, and that the language which has one meaning for them has quite a different meaning for him. And, indeed, there are charlatans among them. And if anything happens to him I shall say strange things of them."

She was in love, then. And it was not the Holy Spirit, nor dissatisfaction with the Protestant ritual, nor longing for the ordeal of saintship, nor belief in his, Father John's, superior nearness to the arcana of spiritual life, which had made her send for him. The priest was disappointed, and yet he felt that she who had so deep an interest in a Catholic Irishman must herself be near to Catholicism.

"You do not find," he said, looking to a bracket at his elbow where a bronze Apollo was gazing round him, in nakedness, and to an ormolu table in a corner, where a Hercules stood, swart and muscular, "that the English Church gives you what you find your soul desires."

"They weary me," said Mrs. Lynch, wearily, looking at the priest with dejection and disappointment.

Father John sat silent for a little; he began to feel that midst the bronze and porcelain of this silk-hung chamber, with that daintily-dressed girl on the threshold of conversion, someone should be present who had experience of religious difficulties under such circumstances. The soul of Pat or Biddy, among the halters, the husks, and the straw, he could always reach without a moment's difficulty, but he felt that Rome could not have sent out too delicate a diplomatist in dealing with one who was confessedly not religious, but who might become so, and who, if she were to be religious, must be treated, in the first instance, according to her Pagan predilections. He thought he would consult the bishop about the matter that very night; then he thought how triumphant a thing it would be for him, the obscure priest of Loughan, to be the means of winning her, of opening her house, her purse, her connections to the clergy of the true communion. Inspired by that thought, he started the religious question again, and talked uninterruptedly for half an hour upon the true uses of incense and perfume, holy water, the burning of lamps and

candles, votive gifts and the veneration of saints, crosses, processions, and miracles.

Mrs. Lynch listened with her lips parted and hands clasped—she was thinking of Finn on the sea, and she hoped somehow that religious conversation might do him no harm.

“Now it is said of us—the Protestant bishop, for example, may often have said it to you—that our Church—and I hope, in the working of the Holy Spirit, your Church also—is no better in respect of its incense and perfume, votive gifts, processions, and miracles, than the Pagan religions which produced these,” pointing to Apollo and Hercules.

“Ah, these are very beautiful and precious, but they do not console one.”

“Not at all, my dear madam; the soul must find some other satisfaction than the contemplation of fleshly form and animal beauty—these are noble in form, I admit, but has not our Church—and I hope, by the working of the Holy Spirit, yours—enlisted in its service sculptors and artists who have beautiful themes more deserving of contemplation than these? Has not our Church given inspired shape in

marble and in bronze, in wood and in wax, to every incident in the career of the Son of God and His mother"—the priest crossed himself, and to his great joy observed that the widow inadvertently crossed herself also—"and the devoted group of lowly disciples from whom our Church has sprung? And would not the contemplation of, say, the Babe portrayed by a Raphael in the arms of His divine mother be as conducive to your feeling for beauty as this?" The priest lifted the Apollo.

"One's friends send one so many of their babies that one tires of them. I like Apollo. He is very serene and perfect. You see I have my child's picture on the opposite wall. He is well enough; but not exactly an object of adoration."

"But you would not allow yourself to adore these?"

"I had not thought of them much; until you pointed out Apollo I was not conscious of his presence, nor have been for weeks—no, nor Hercules either. They were not in my thoughts. I am very, very miserable, Father John, and I have sent for you to tell me what

you know of things that may help me into a better frame of mind."

"It will take some time," said the priest, "some little time, and then you will cast it all behind you."

"But I am not religious—it all means nothing to me. I am bored to death."

Again there was a pause. Father John saw a harp, as he thought, reposing in a corner.

"I think I observe what no Irishman can see without emotion, madam—the old musical instrument of our country."

"Ah—the harp. I sometimes exercise my fingers on it. There is a tradition about that harp having been among the Lynches and O'Flahertys since the period of the giants."

"I believe it, madam," said the priest fervently, laying himself back in his chair to listen to Mrs. Lynch's playing on it. It was very good playing, and, what the widow did not think of at the time, it threw back the frilling and bared an immaculate arm. Mrs. Lynch played and then broke into a low chant, singing with much sweetness. It ran thus:—

"To sing the requiems
Is thine by special right,

Mass upon lawful days,
Sunday alone with Thursday,
If not upon every day.
Masses for all the Christians,
And for all those in orders.
Masses for the multitudes,
From the lowest to the greatest.
When you come unto the mass—
It is a noble office—
Let there be penitence of heart,
shedding of tears,
And throwing up of the hands.
For pure is the body which thou receivest,
Purely must thou go to receive it."

When Mrs. Lynch had done, she saw with surprise that the priest's cheeks were wet with tears.

She had not so much as thought of the words herself; at any time they were only sounds to her; she had caught them up from Morris, who had been taught them by his tutor.

"Madam," he said, rising, "you have put before me the words of Saint Mochuda, the old preacher and teacher of these parts twelve hundred years ago. I take it. I take it. You are saved. You are one of us. You have embraced the faith, and the memory

of the Episcopal Church will fall off you like rags from Cophetua.”

Mrs. Lynch did not understand him ; but as he rose to go, she asked him to say masses for O’Brien, and there were twenty pounds to distribute as he thought proper.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GENERAL'S FUTURE.

THE eccentric American soon became known to Galport and the neighbourhood. He was mildly spied upon by the police; but he presently put all suspicions at rest by renting a large old mill on the river, which had gone silent a generation ago, and had never been resuscitated.

A man who rents a mill is not likely to be suspected of sedition in a community where a third of its inhabitants are more or less always on the verge of starvation. It was concluded that if the American had Irish national views, they were adopted and aired for the sake of his flour sacks. At any rate he was allowed to go out and in to his hotel without so much as a thought being given to him by the authorities; as an employer of labour he was regarded as a possible benefactor to the West. And it

was no long time before he had a considerable body of workmen engaged upon the fabric, to the great discomfort of the sparrows and swallows and starlings who had gathered in the eaves, the chimneys, and ivy of it.

In connection with his business on the river the miller opened a little office in the square, and though he kept his quarters in the hotel, that was only considered one of the costly eccentricities which a man coming out of the greater West might indulge with impunity. It was not to be supposed of one so obviously rich and free, that he should settle down in a town-house like an ordinary trader.

It is not necessary to say much of Horsa Gorton's life before he appears on the scene of these events. Enough may be judged of him from the facts (1) that he was born in Virginia of an American father and an Irish mother; (2) that during the secession of Virginia from the Federal Government in 1861, he joined the Confederate cause, and had, as a militiaman, an active hand in the first capture of stores at Navy Yard, Norfolk; (3) that he was one of the defeated and wounded captains of the Virginian Army when M'Clellan went over

the Alleghanies; (4) that after six months' imprisonment he reappeared and took part in the battle of Shiloh, as a major; was wounded again and remained more or less in hospital till the war was finished. Ireland was the affectation or passion of his life; from boyhood his mother had educated him in the belief that it was the paradise of earthly islands. After the ruin consequent on the abolition of his father's slave trade, he had found himself in New York, and naturally drifted among Irish people. With a fine capacity for organisation, a brain a little shaken by wounds and exposure to the chances of war, and ready, therefore, to entertain any scheme and regard it as practicable, and to a keen trading instinct a pleasure in romance for romance's sake, he was sufficiently well equipped for a sunburst. He had come to Ireland carrying credentials from the innermost circle of patriotic brothers, and he was recognised in subterranean Ireland as probably *the* chief of the movement towards liberation. It was his conviction that English sympathy with the North had ended in the subjugation of the Confederates, and his reso-

lution to help liberate the Irish was strengthened by the feeling that, in doing so, he was establishing a confederacy in the heart of the nation which, more than any other, had suppressed that to which he himself had belonged.

It was no small disappointment to Gorton to find that schemes which had taken a long time to mature, and some money to execute, had come to nothing. A regiment demoralised, arms partially distributed, the feeling of the West fairly stirred up by O'Gee and his crew, then a raid, a series of apprehensions, and—silence everywhere, with the thing to begin all over again. Yes, to begin and to end too, determined Gorton with the eye of a general, the resolution of an enthusiast, the knowledge of a trader, and nothing to hope for elsewhere. To his sanguine mind, the raising of the West and South seemed a comparatively easy matter. Good luck might fasten a big war upon England; in which case it would be child's play to knock their garrison on the head, blow up their railways, fortify the fastnesses, and pour in supplies from America.

Without a foreign war, however, he saw his

way to the formation of a regiment in every hamlet, armed and equipped under cover of darkness and secrecy; when he had made very certain that such efficiency had been reached, and the regiments, through the local societies, paying their way to a certain extent, the sunburst would come. In the meantime he would go on with his mill and office, receive subscriptions, and organise.

No meeting of No. XII. was got together again within these early weeks of the departure of O'Brien and Conran. But in his office in the square the general had great revolutionary business on hand. For some time nothing sanguinary had occurred in the West, and the society subscriptions were getting rather short; Gorton, therefore, collected all the English mill accidents, railway disasters, sinkings at sea and canal, unexplained murders, and gave out, through a member of his staff, a teacher's assistant on a coast village, that such and such were the outcome of the operations of the invisible army. They were not—even by his own staff—regarded as satisfactory as a levelling of some of the Irish garrisons might have been. But Gorton explained,—

"I have rented a mill upon the river. Will you leave it to me to say that from that mill Galport barracks will yet be laid in ashes? We will soon have enough and to spare of the same kind of thing."

* * * * *

Returning from one of his excursions along the coast, Gorton saw Eileen's candle in her window one evening, and asked his fishermen to put him ashore at the creek. They did so, and as he passed up to the thatched cottage beneath the Nunnery walls, the nuns were chanting, and the notes of an organ deepened and sweetened the harmony. The adventurer clasped his hands and listened with delight. This then was really the Ireland his mother had taught him to know. Yes, yes, heaven was over all, and his cause was the best one he had ever taken up.

As usual Eileen was at her spinning-wheel when he entered. She was less desperate and disheartened than the last time he had seen her.

"Come outside, girl, and hear the nuns interceding for Ireland."

They went out together and descended to the bridge.

"Now I want to show you something, Eileen Conran. There is the edge of a sickle of moon on the sea. Will you come with me and learn your duties in the West?"

"I hope I know them," said Eileen softly, rather resenting at the same time the general's desire to put a protecting arm around her.

"You know them and are faithful to them too. But I want to show you a sight which will convince you that all is well and the day is not far off. Up and dress yourself, and I will wait in the boat."

They set out across the bar of the stream, the fishermen silent as the grave, Gorton and Eileen at the helm, conversing in whispers, for there was little wind, and there was no saying where the coast-guard might be. They crossed the bay and ran into the sea-lough at the head of which the Abbey of St. Columbkille reposed upon its island, but they did not go so far in as the gunboat on the day of Mrs. Lynch's shooting party.

On a strand of sloping rocks Gorton led Eileen, dressed in full Irish costume, towards the road which skirted the shore.

"Now you shall see," he said, taking a

Jew's-harp from his pocket, raising it to his mouth and producing a complexity of sound, which on so ineffective an instrument was amazing enough. As the last notes of the "Harp that once through Tara's halls" died away, a crowd of men, armed with rifles and bayonets leapt out upon the open road from the overhanging brackens and heath. Not a word was spoken. The general held up his hand, and two lines, five-and-twenty in each, formed in front of him.

"To-night I present to you the Princess of the Claddagh," he remarked in a voice of low command. "Look at her, lads. Stand out, Eileen. Look at her, with the ray of moonlight on her brooch, and recognise in her Ireland personified. Speak to them, Eileen."

"God save Ireland," said Eileen, at a loss for a phrase, and moved almost to tears by the spectacle of the dusky soldiers of the invisible army.

The general put them through their evolutions for three-quarters of an hour, and played them into the hillside with his Jew's-harp. Then he crossed the bay, and in the centre of a ruin overlooking the sands he called up

another company, presented Eileen to them, and sent them back to their homes. It was past midnight when a third landing was made, but on the open sands just beyond the Nunnery he raised another group. Eileen was fairly overcome with the splendid prospect.

As she went up the creek and into her home she felt that, spite of her father's absence and her lover's banishment, she was almost happy.

CHAPTER XV.

A LITTLE TALK.

To change one's religion, one must have a religion to begin with. It is doubtful whether Mrs. Lynch ever had. Her husband never had, and she, who had married when quite a girl, was absolutely without faith of any kind at sixteen. It is late in the day to go into Mrs. Lynch's early life, and not much depends upon it. She was the daughter of a half-pay officer, and an uncle in India paid for her education at a Chiselhurst boarding school. At Chiselhurst she met the major one day crossing the common in a high wind. He was pursuing his hat, and she had the good luck to put one foot upon it and to return it to him. She afterwards met him at the house of one of the school-girls, when, on duly inquiring into her history, and finding that she had neither mother nor father, that her brother,

on adopting his uncle's name, had been made his heir, and was so much out of the way that she did not know where he was living or what he was doing, the major proposed that she should become Mrs. Lynch. And Mrs. Lynch she had become, neither uncle nor brother concerning themselves about her, as she certainly did not concern herself about them.

The conventional attendance at church, and the homage of ecclesiastical persons she had experienced in abundance. But her heart had never been touched either by religion or the ministers of it.

It seemed likely, however, that a shaft had gone home to that organ, through the preference for O'Brien, which had overtaken her in her intercourse with the men of the West.

Father John's representations, above all the recollection of his personality, were not by themselves sufficient to make her Catholic. The image of the tall tutor was inextricably mixed up with her new leaning, for in the light of it all things Irish seemed to her to become admirable.

She nowadays often passed from the trim perfection of her own park and the wide-acred

fields of her home farm to the patchy knolls of the village of Innes, into which were gathered the labourers and cotters and petty farmers of the outlying portion of her estate, and she felt a certain satisfaction in viewing the devil-me-care poverty of the crones and boys. How much simplicity there was in it! How sincere a disregard of wealth! What benign content with the bad things Providence had assigned them! It was so un-English, yet so original and in its way so charming, because they bore it all with hearts so light. But her religion was of a piece with her sentiment for Ireland, it hung on to her as yet unacknowledged love for the absent lad.

So far as Father John was concerned, it is doubtful whether he would have made much headway with her, because, finding that he liked to see and hear her play the harp, she amused herself with his alternations of mood, under the different patriotic chants she sung to him. He cried copiously—a new experience in Mrs. Lynch's observations of men, and one which tickled her so much that she selected for him all the wailing passages of music she could find suitable for the harp, and suggestive

of dead heroes, wakes, wounded warriors, and what not.

It was she, consequently, who was converting Father John, not he her.

One day, however, he brought Father Hugh Kenealy to her, and left him in the boudoir while he went further afield.

Father Hugh looked more like a Roman saint than an Irish priest. Such faces as his Giotto and Cimabue had put on their canvases for the service of their Church. The widow, as she looked at him for the first time, started as if she had seen him before. There was an indescribable attraction of simplicity and fervour in his aspect. There was a slight whiff of peat reek in his garments, but it was far from being offensive to her, as Father John's whiskey certainly was. His voice, too, was more authoritative than the other's, with a more tender accent, and his choice of words was that of a gentleman and a scholar. He gained her attention at once by saying, "I have been living with Father John for a day or two. I have come to see what can be done about Mr. O'Brien. I believe in him. I have known him from his cradle. I have watched the

growth of his talents, under great difficulties, and I think with fair play he might have been a credit to his country. Now I fear he is thrown back permanently."

"You have heard of him?"

"From Baltimore I had a letter, telling me he was obliged to flee the country. I am so convinced that it is an injustice that I have come from Ballybunion to speak with the college authorities and to ask the officers of the executive whether it is not possible to restore one from whom so much may be hoped."

"I am of the same opinion as you," said the widow; "I think Mr. O'Brien has quite the greatest amount of talent of any of his countrymen I have met. I too believe in him. We shall, I think, agree in a great many things, Father Kenealy."

Next Sunday Mrs. Lynch attended mass at the little chapel of Loughan, not with the view of having it administered, but with the object of understanding it. Her joy at the news of Finn's safety, so far, opened her sympathies still more widely with all the causes with which his enthusiasm was associated.



"With shot number seven chilled, I did very well—had the best bag of snipe I ever took among these bogs," said little Captain Thorburn at the fireside of the County Club one Thursday afternoon.

"Never could shoot snipe—er—don't know where to send the shot to. Bird gets up, goes along like a flash of fork lightning. Er—fire at the beginning of the fork and bird has escaped at t'other end of it. That's my experience," observed Lord Mountinnes.

"Why don't you fire at the further end of the fork to begin with? You can depend upon the movements of a snipe just as much as upon a brocket."

"I hate all shooting—er—where you require to retrieve among bogs—er—how do, Jeffery; thought you had gone to the Bermudas with the —th? Glad to see you."

Captain Jeffery took a spill and lit a cigar; he had stepped down from the Barracks to show he had returned the day before.

"I shall do more good here than out there," he said, shaking Thorburn's hand and nodding to De Burgh and Mr. Butler.

"I've been allowed to exchange into the —th.

But the crisis is all over, and my experience is not of much use."

"The man for the crisis!" said the magistrate sarcastically, seeing in the returned captain only a new candidate for the hand of the mistress of Tasmania.

"Yes, it's all over," continued the man of law, "thanks to the civil arm. Without vanity, I think I may take credit for having broken up the most troublesome organization Ireland has had since '98. For half-a-dozen years or so Ireland will really be a country to live in. I can't promise you any sport more serious than snipes, captain."

"So be it," said the captain, waiting for the gun-boat man to assert the predominance of other arms in Ireland than the civil. "My idea is, Butler, that one man-of-war on the Irish coast is worth the whole paid magistracy put together."

"And one company of the —th," added Jeffery, "worth all the constabulary service."

"I don't know about a man-of-war," said the magistrate; "as we don't happen to have more than a little gun-boat in the bay, I can't pretend to know."

“Er—had him there,” said Lord Mountinnes.

“A picnic cruiser,” added the magistrate, crushingly; “a go-between for the moors. You might as well talk of Thomson’s dredging-draggs keeping the country in order. As for the red-coats,” pursued the magistrate, looking hard at Jeffery, “they demoralise every six months, and are of no use whatever.”

“Bless you, my children,” said De Burgh, who had recently been shot at, and who having pursued the intending assassin across three fields, and finding it was a little lad in his teens, had hurled him and his blunderbuss into a morass, without an effort at further punishment. “Bless you, we need all three of you. And d’ye know the latest news? My beautiful and accomplished neighbour has gone over to the enemy. Ne’er a patriot breathes who is one-tenth as patriotic as the mistress of Tasmania. She has remitted all the hanging-gales. She’s turning the village of Innes into an almshouse. She has ended by turning the Protestants out of her house, and last Sunday she attended mass at the

little chapel of Loughan. Butler, it's all your work. You have positively persecuted her."

"I will believe it when I know it on other authority than yours," said the magistrate.

"The solemn and hollow scepticism of the law is only equalled," said De Burgh, "by its ridiculous pretensions to omniscience."

"Er—it's disgusting," reflected Lord Mountinnes, "to think of a fine woman like that going to the priests. Is there nothing we can do for her? Er—let us put our heads together. I don't believe she knows what she's about."

"She knows perfectly. It's pure spite. To spite her neighbours and friends and admirers, because Butler got that good-looking young Irishman hunted out of the country."

"A fire-brand and an assassin," replied Butler.

"I daresay there's another reason for it," said Jeffery hotly. "It's pretty well known that she's sitting down in estates that don't belong to her and didn't belong to her husband by law, and she's cultivating the priests to keep her son's interests right."

The captain spoke so hotly, and with so

rapid a change of countenance from coolness to something like passion, that his assertions startled the group.

"That's a very old story to have got hold of, captain," said De Burgh, who had some faint recollection of a legend in connection with the Lynch estates. "It's a burst-up piece of gossip a century old. There's no law in it, not as much as would carry it into the consulting room of the humblest solicitor in Ireland. Where did you pick it up?"

"From the bottom of Galport Bay," Jeffery was on the point of saying, but he restrained himself. It was, indeed, that he might satisfy his conscience by endeavouring to reinstate Eileen Conran in her own that he had come back to Galport. The exchange of regiment had been effected without very much difficulty, the only surprising thing at headquarters being that an officer should care to resume duty in the 'dismal West when he had an opportunity of going elsewhere.

He came back as senior captain of the Barracks, and in the meantime he had put into the hands of a Dublin solicitor of considerable renown all the recovered books

bearing on the original Eileen Lynch, who had left the Nunnery to marry the pilot. The first information he had about the case was that it seemed clear enough that the firm was willing to investigate Eileen's rights, that it had obtained the opinion of eminent counsel, and that, if he were at the outset prepared to pay away a little money, the case would be duly taken up. And it was with the determination that the lowly princess of the Claddagh should become a queen upon her own estates that Jeffery had resumed duties at the Barracks.

"Who's the new claimant?" asked the magistrate, eyeing the captain suspiciously, and seeing from his appearance that some unusual emotion was working in him.

"How d'ye do, bishop?" roared De Burgh to a reluctant figure at the door. "Have you heard the latest?"

The bishop hemmed and hawed, and said he understood that peace was now restored to Ireland, though O'Gee was threatening to disestablish the Church.

"Oh, it's something much more fatal than that. Beatrice has turned Roman Catholic."

"I have just been speaking to Father Hugh Kenealy," said the bishop, "of Round Tower fame—the most profound student and observer we have at the present moment. He said nothing of it."

"I should think not. When they make a 'vert they don't brag. They know their business better than some people."

"You will be at the Principal's dinner, I presume? Father Kenealy will be there. I shall make inquiries. I believe he is here to make further investigations in connection with cromlechs and dolmens."

The bishop went into a neighbouring room.

"If anything would reconcile me to the disestablishment of the Church, it's the sight of that muff," said De Burgh, decanting spirits unto himself.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE SANDS.

SOME people profess to have such a feeling as that of stepping upon air. Mrs. Lynch having for some time withdrawn herself from the genial Protestant gaieties of her neighbourhood felt as if her feet were on that pathway. Everything had become very unreal and unsubstantial to her. She sometimes hoped it meant that she was becoming very good and Catholic. Yet there were times when the unreality of her position was not softened by any imaginary light from behind the altar, or heavenly aroma from the censer, or feather of angel's wings. It arose partly from the fact that Tasmania, her home, was in O'Brien's estimation another person's home, that O'Brien himself, stalwart, kind, helpful, had vanished into space just when she most needed him; and that the group of friends who had been

accustomed to come about her had lost for her the element of friendship which had given substance to life. Yes, it was all shadowy, unreal, nothing positive in it but Morris, who was growing up masterful, disobedient, cruel, and insisting very much upon his position as squire.

O'Brien's story of the estates had not been quite put out of her mind by Father John, to whom she had entrusted part of it. The father was not unaware that the fact of a Catholic claimant might be used, with advantage, though on inquiry he gave no great credence to the claim, and decided that what the Church authorities had agreed to leave undisturbed it was not her business to meddle with. Until he had made sure of Mrs. Lynch's conversion he therefore surrounded the subject with the aroma of mystery, which it was part of his professional duty to throw about everything. But in the meantime he advised her to approach the claimant with an offer of making her a personal attendant.

"I have no very great belief in her right to the estates. But I know a little of her. She is a superior girl in her way, and you might,

from motives of Christian charity, be able to do her much good within your own household. Eileen is a clever girl, and would, I feel sure, be acceptable to you in service about your person. As a lady's maid, I would conceive of her as doing her duty well, and it would be as near a restoration of her supposed lost fortunes as you could give."

So spoke Father John, and as Girling was going into the Barracks to rear a family of children for a tall sergeant, it seemed to Mrs. Lynch that to get the nice Irish girl as a lady's maid would be an exceedingly pleasant way of adjusting difficulties. It harmonized with her new enthusiasm for the race, representatives of whom she meant to put into all places of trust about her. Her Englishmen must go back to England; and she should show an example to the rest of the neighbourhood, and prove that Ireland for the Irish was not so preposterous a cry as it was said to be.

It was right, she now believed, that they should be encouraged in every relationship of life. It was therefore with some enthusiasm that she drove through the Claddagh one forenoon and descended from her chaise at the

walls of the Nunnery, overlooking the bridge at Eileen Conran's house.

She had not been before at the mouth of the brook which flowed through her lands; as she overlooked the bridge from the Nunnery gate she thought well of it. There were indeed red nets upon poles overhanging the crag above the stream, and the bridge itself presently filled up with a gibbering crowd of men and women; but to her artist's eye the opening of the stream upon a bar of surf, on either side of which the ribbed sand stretched away into the distance, hovered over by snowy birds, afforded a delightful retreat for any one.

As she was looking, Eileen came out of her door and descended to the bridge. The girl was dressed again in her Irish costume, without jewellery, and it seemed to Mrs. Lynch that there was a wonderful air of dignity about her. She was certainly not a fish-fag, as most of the women on the bridge were, and as she stood above the key-stone of the arch, with her back to the prospect, a space was cleared for her.

It was a curious picture, and one which the widow could not interpret, for as Eileen

stood first a man, and then a woman, then again a man and a woman together, a lad and two lasses came up, harangued her in Erse, gave their emotions full vent, as the stamping of feet and gesticulating of arms showed, and each in turn, when Eileen had spoken, fell into the rear without further words.

The girl then was a princess in more than the name; she was really what she had proclaimed herself, and as in half-an-hour's time the ceremony, whatever it was, seemed to be finished, Mrs. Lynch met her on the pathway, and holding out her hand exclaimed, "I have found you out again. Would you explain to me what it is you have been doing on the bridge?"

"My father is on the sea. I am judging the people till he comes back. They take my word as well as father's, and I do as well as I can. I try to be fair, and they know it, and though they don't fear me like my father, they always take what I say as for the best. And if there's anything they are not sure about they are willing to wait. The Claddagh has always been like that."

"Then you don't have any lawyers among you?"

"We hate them, and all the Saxon courts and customs. We can always settle our own disputes."

"That is very nice," cried Mrs. Lynch, feeling, however, that a girl who was able to try cases in public was not likely to thank her for the offer of such a post as that of lady's maid. "I have not been here before," she added, looking round upon the Nunnery walls, "perhaps you are not too busy to show me the shore. I came to see you."

"I know you this time," said Eileen; "you are the English madam at Tasmania. I called you the widdy and stole your trout. I hope there is no offence, for none was meant."

"Ah, I am not vindictive—at least not very, and in your case not at all. To be sure, what a noble shore-line, and what formidable breakers on your bar, and the sea-gulls dipping their wings on the edge of the waves—how picturesque it all is!"

"And a little dangerous too, madam. Ah, will I ever forget the day when Michael's—that's my father's—boat capsized at the bar, and not one, no, not one, not O'Callaghan, not Morrissey, not Macnamara, not Clancy could

swim out of it! And my dear father, with his heavy boots on and his oilskin overall, he paddled out of it somehow. Oh, I see them drowning yet!" And Eileen stopped on the pathway to the shore, and cast her eyes about her wildly and wrung her hands.

"I have never looked upon death but twice," said Mrs. Lynch; "it is not pleasant to think about it."

Eileen was silent, and led her out upon the shore; they looked back presently at the Nunnery garden. Some of the nuns were sunning themselves among the cork-oaks; a father or two chatted with them.

"It is the Nunnery, madam," said Eileen, trying to explain to herself the reason of the visit, as they looked in upon it. "Many's the time I've been invited inside it for good and all; but, dear me, I'm far better to be free. I would die in no time in confinement."

"I think so should I," said Mrs. Lynch, looking over the ribbed sands and breaking waves to the blue sea and the white ships sailing below the horizon.

"Now, madam, if it's the Claddagh you would see, turn round to the right. There's

the harbour, but the tide is very far out; it's admired for its beauty, however, and I've seen persons paint it from where we are standing—the boats rocking with their masts sideways at the end of the pier, the fishermen arglebargling among the ropes, and the wind on the water, all very nice and like. Perhaps you have come down to paint it."

"No, not to-day. Indeed, I only came to see you, Eileen. I have been hearing a great deal about you, a great deal in your favour, from Father John O'Clery. You do not know, perhaps, that I have now become one of you, one of the Irish people. Of course one can't throw off one's being, and I am English by birth; but I think I am able to become Irish through sympathy."

Eileen scrutinised the handsome figure and the well-marked face, but had nothing to say.

"I have become Catholic too."

"Sure, and what could you be other than that? It's the only Church."

"I believe so, but I was Protestant before. I think your Church will suit me better. At least Father John has not proposed to marry me yet!"

"Oh, madam, it's not making a fool of us, you are, and of the Church."

"Yes, but you don't understand. In other churches the priests do marry. A large part of their time is devoted to finding wives with money. You would not believe me if I told you how many of them approached me with that intention."

"I never heard of such a thing."

"No, I daresay not."

"And have you had a good confession, madam?"

"Yes,—I don't know that I like that so well. To be an unmarried man it struck me that Father John put some very odd questions. However, it is a very knowing Church."

"You make me laugh, madam. You take it so jaunty like. But then, you'll not be training for a saint. Nor neither am I."

"No, not for a saint."

"You remember the last time you met me, I said you were own sister surely to a gentleman I knew?"

"To Captain Jeffery?"

"Well now, when you put things jaunty like you remind me of him again. Ah, dear me!"

"Now Eileen, I see my coachman has returned to the bridge, and it is time I returned too. You can give me a little help, as a fellow Catholic you know, and it is for that I have come. My own personal attendant, my lady's maid, the girl who is always out and in my bedroom and my wardrobe, is going to the Barracks to be married. She is a good Protestant girl, but I now wish to have a Catholic. Do you know such a girl? Can you recommend one?"

"Has Father John said anything?" asked Eileen, cautiously.

"He has recommended you."

Eileen drew herself up and waved her right hand towards the village and the city of Galport. They were two queens as they stood upon the shore, Beatrice and Eileen, and the nuns who looked out upon the sands, from their cork-oaks sighed as they saw them.

"No, madam, no servitude for Eileen Conran. Ask the priest. I am free, and free I shall remain."

"Well, good-bye, dear," said Mrs. Lynch, softening to the proud spirit of the girl, and feeling that after all it was not so improbable

that this creature was the true Irish possessor of the estates.

Eileen shook hands with her, and looking into her face, the last words she added were,

“Oh, madam, you are like him.”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PRINCIPAL'S DINNER.

MRS. LYNCH had a certain peremptoriness in her nature which, so soon as she had taken a resolution, led her into immediate action. Having made up her mind to people her stables, her yards, and her house with Irishmen, she forthwith put her plans into execution. She gathered her servants together, one day, on the lawn, and in her widow's attire addressed them as follows.

“You have been very good servants, all of you. I have no fault to find with you, but there come times when one has to change all one's servants. It often happens. No, Thomas, it is not quite as you think it. It is not poverty. Nor do I accuse you of stealing. Quite the contrary; I have a high idea of your faithfulness and devotion to duty. I am not getting married again, Cook—that is not the

reason at all. And James, if you think the priests have anything to do with it, it is your duty, for you are still my servant, not to speak so disrespectfully of them in my hearing. I should desire to part with you all on the friendliest terms, putting presents into your hands, and your wages, and fares to Dublin and London—those of you I engaged in London. I will expect you all to be ready next week to go. You have all my best wishes.”

And sure enough Mrs. Lynch's English servants all took train early in the following week for the East, while she filled her kitchen, her stables, and her garden with natives. She had the blessings of Fathers John and Hugh for the action she took, though they both inculcated patience upon her and assurance that, for some time, she must not expect things to be quite as they were before. On the recommendation of the former she took Theresina of Loughan as her lady's-maid, not knowing of her acquaintanceship with Finn O'Brien. She only found out by an exclamation of Theresina's, the morning after her engagement, that Finn was known to her.

Theresina had brought her mistress's coffee in the morning, and having spilt half of it on the snowy coverlet, seized a disengaged pillow to wipe the stain out. Mrs. Lynch rose on her elbow to suggest a less drastic treatment, when the girl, dropping the pillow and lifting a photograph of O'Brien which she had dragged out, exclaimed,

"Sure and it's himself to the very buttons on his breeches and the collar of his coat."

Mrs. Lynch was annoyed, partly because her stainless coverlet was marked with a deep hue of coffee, mostly because the uncere-
monious lifting of O'Brien's photograph revealed herself to herself in a ridiculous light.

"Girl," she said, "you must not make such savage darts at things. Don't come into the room as if you were leaping for your life across a bog. You seem to know the person in the photograph. Can you suggest how such a thing could have found its way under my pillow? But never mind. Do you know the lad?"

"Oh, madam, it's Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Finn O'Brien, of Ballybunion, Loop Head, who is

to be the saviour of Ireland. Poor dear man, and it's us of Loughan who has missed him since they turned him out of the country, drove him away, madam," and Theresina put the photograph to her lips.

"Girl, you are very demonstrative. Put down the photograph. I shall ring if I want you again. But stay, you need not go yet. How did you come to know Mr. O'Brien?"

The question was asked so sharply, so suspiciously, that Theresina remembered how Father John had inculcated upon her that, if Mrs. Lynch ever talked of Finn O'Brien, she was to be told, as if Theresina were an admiring stranger, that the young man was noble in his disposition, kind to the poor, a diligent student, a brave sportsman, and a true son of the Church.

She stood at the bedside and recited her lesson with so much precision and accuracy that the widow smiled on her forgivingly.

"You seem to be—ahem—did you live near Mr. O'Brien?"

"No, not so near him neither, but I would see him pass in his car to the college, and I would hear him sing in the chapel, and

we couldn't but notice his handsome face and figure."

"We—who are the ones who noticed him?"

"Dear me, madam, just all the young ladies of Loughan; but Mr. O'Brien, if he was always polite, was a little cold, and gave nobody any encouragement. But pity the day that drove him from the West. Do you think, madam, he will ever come back again?"

"How should I know?" asked Mrs. Lynch, now at her looking-glass. "But, Theresina—and by the way I find that a very inconvenient, long name, I must shorten it."

"Terry is short for Theresina."

"No, I shall call you Sin, it is shorter still; do you like it?"

"I'll ask Father John," said the girl ingenuously.

"Oh, never mind about Father John's opinion. We can't take it on everything in the wide world. Sin is a very good name. I shall call you Sin. Perhaps I had better call you Original Sin," she added, as she became aware of the girl's ineffectual effort to dress ner without fuss and heedlessness.

The Principal's dinner came off the same evening. Having taken counsel with Father John, Mrs. Lynch had decided to go to it. She did not want to feel quite out of relationship with her neighbours. Besides, in her heart, she thought something might be done for the absent O'Brien ; and Father Hugh was to be there, as there was no reason why he should be excluded on the ground of his Catholicism. The Principal, in selecting his guests, had put Kenealy on the list on account of his scholarship and his wide knowledge of Celtic priories, crosses, and what not. Though it was a Protestant college he felt that scholarship was neutral ground. Besides, he had himself been put into his position by a government anxious for his college to be on terms of friendship with all parties, and it was his *haute politique* to cultivate impartially the friendship of all.

As Mrs. Lynch entered his drawing-room, two of whose windows overlooked the quadrangle, she found no one there but the Principal and his sister and Captain Jeffery. The captain seemed very refined and handsome in his uniform, as he stood looking

into the open space in the centre of the seat of learning. The students had gone out of it for the day; it was deserted. But by-and-by a couple of men came into it carrying a mysterious parcel. By that time the room was filling up, and Mrs. Lynch and the captain were discussing trifles.

"What should you take that mysterious object to be?" she asked him in the window.

Jeffery looked hard at the tarpaulin and remarked that if he were sending in a report of the premises to head-quarters he would say, "Immediately before dinner was served, a dead man was carried across the quadrangle."

The widow drew in her shoulders and contracted the muscle of her eyebrows, gazing with a sort of fascination on the retreating package.

"To be sure, you soldiers always have your minds running upon death."

"Not without cause," said the soldier, as a gust of wind swept through the corridors of the College, lifted the tarpaulin, and revealed the naked head and breast of two dead men.

Mrs. Lynch put her hand on the curtain and leant on it so heavily that the fasteners

snapped at the poles. The Principal's sister did not like it. She thought it was some wildness on the part of the widow got up for the admiration of the handsome soldier, until coming to the window, she looked down and saw the parcel and the uncovered nakedness of head and breast, when she fairly lost consciousness, and went off into the arms of a neighbourly professor in a dead faint.

"Goodness gracious!" said the new colonel, a tall, rigid, immovable figure. "Patty, my dear, do you happen to have a bottle of——?" But Patty, his tall and rigid wife, had already anticipated him, and was standing over the collapsed lady.

"Er—what is it all about, Mrs. Lynch?" asked Lord Mountinnes, who had not long been in the room, but who saw an unusual pallor on the widow's face, while one after another of the ladies approached, peeped into the quadrangle, made little exclamations, and retired into the room shocked. The Principal himself, having stared at the dead ones, went pale, and there was much discomfort until the colonel, opening one of the windows, called down to nobody,

"Damme, take these things out of that." Then turning to Jeffery, he said, "See that these things are moved."

"Ah," explained Professor Thomson, who had just come in, "dissection, colonel, dissection. But the fellows had no taste."

"Shouldn't like to have a dead-room so devilish near my dinner-table," said the colonel.

It took some little time before the Principal's sister was herself again, and Mrs. Lynch's appetite was quite gone when she sat down between Jeffery and Lord Mountinnes, Father Hugh Kenealy, the colonel's wife, and Professor Dacy opposite.

Jeffery was glad to have the opportunity of being beside the widow. He was the greatest enemy she had in the world. He meant, if he could do it, to turn her out of her property, and to restore to that property a girl he loved. He told himself that the action he was taking was all chivalry and desire for fair-play. He professed to himself to see nothing proximately or remotely in the restoration that would benefit himself, for the girl was peculiar, and had not promised to go on loving him in return.

It was his object, therefore, to understand the beautiful fraud, as he considered her, who was bending her ear to the impoverished lord on her right—to understand her character and take such hints from it as would serve the lawyers in whose hands he had placed the destiny of the recovered documents. But it was difficult, after the soup was removed and Lord Mountinnes had helped her to some of her own venison, to get any conversation out of her. His lordship was a slow talker, his conversation having no sort of concatenation, being a mass rather of irrelevances carried on amidst a multitude of “haws” and “ers.” And though Mrs. Lynch’s ear seemed inclined to him, she was really straining towards the voice of Father Hugh, who having gone over his reason for believing that Homer was one and indivisible had got to the question of the recent expulsions from the College of Galport.

Mrs. Lynch could not hear distinctly, for now the table was thoroughly engaged, from the Principal at the further end, occupied in a solemn discussion upon university education to which his neighbours right and left were listening with impatience qualified by good feeding,

to his sister at the remoter end, still emaciated, but chirruping cheerfully of her brother's taste for mushrooms. Occasionally, too, fourteen voices seemed all going at once. But as far as Mrs. Lynch could make out, Professor Dacy had rudely depicted Finn O'Brien as a monstrous Irishman, never destined by nature for scholarship or the professions, and who, now he had retired from Galport, would not again be heard of, except as a farm labourer.

"We shall see," said Father Hugh, glancing off the subject and not returning to it again in her hearing.

Professor Dacy's emphatic opinion had the effect of making her quite silent, greatly to Lord Mountinnes's annoyance, because it gave Captain Jeffery the opportunity of talking at some length in dulcet tones at her elbow, while sweetmeats were giving place to dessert, and a new selection of wines.

The captain was telling a story of a wonderful estate somewhere in England, which should have passed on to the grandson of the original holder, when suddenly it was discovered that a girl in quite a humble position—a fisher-girl, in fact, who cared nothing about land or high

estate, was the true heir. The pity of it was, too, that the holder of the land was an attractive and popular woman, whom it would have rejoiced everybody to have seen maintain her place. She was so high-minded, however, that when she came to understand the justice of the case she gave up her position, and the fisher-girl ascended the throne.

Captain Jeffery, finding that his end of the tale was throwing in an appreciative silence while he told his story, embellished it with some wit and sentiment, at which the principal's sister smiled, while Lord Mountinnes, glad to hear the end of it, asked for the county to which the wonderful anecdote related. That, however, was a secret.

"And did the fisher-girl marry the captain?" queried Mrs. Lynch, who did not mistake the drift of the story.

Jeffery dropped his handkerchief and nervously backed his chair into the calves of an attendant, changed colour twice, and looked the widow full in the face.

"Why, to be sure, how like you are! You might pass for sister and brother," said the principal's sister.

“Er—don’t think so,” said Lord Mountinnes, “though—er—I heard somebody say that the wolf of the story was brother to Red Riding Hood.”

“Well, you have not answered my question,” continued the widow, scrutinising Jeffery and having an electric uneasiness as their eyes searched each other.

“I don’t know that I said anything about a captain, did I?” he replied softly, wonderingly, as he continued to look the widow over. “I had a sister once,” he said, “but——” The rest of the speech was lost in a general outburst of conversation, for the captain had told his anecdote, and nobody seemed inclined to give him a monopoly of the talk. Mrs. Lynch, however, remained very quiet, and at night, when Father Hugh drove with her to Tasmania, she told him that she could not explain it, but she felt somehow that Captain Jeffery was a brother, and that fate seemed to have sent him to Ireland to rob her son of his inheritance.

But it seemed so extraordinary a story that Father Hugh only smiled, and said nothing ever happened in real life like it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PROSPECTS.

FINN O'BRIEN woke on the morning after his arrival at Brighton with the sensation of being driven down a steep place into the sea. And that was exactly what was occurring as, his head jolted from his elbow in the inner chamber of the bathing machine, he wakened up to feel the waves beating against it. He roused himself from his sleeping posture, looked from a little window in the rear of his hut upon wheels, and saw one other similar hut was being brought down the steep place to the sea. Then he tried the door, and having succeeded in opening it, he found himself in the outer chamber, where a gold watch and chain reposed on a shelf, with a purse gaping with sovereigns at its side, while fashionable clothes hung from pegs, the owner of them in the meantime appearing to Finn's eyes as

a bobbing red rotundity which, with its back turned, was refreshing itself among the waves. From the watch Finn saw that it was still early morning,—not yet nine o'clock, in fact,—and the meaning of the hut then became apparent to him. In this luxurious England, upon whose shore he had just set foot, they were not content to bathe from the rocks and the strand—they must needs have wooden houses to cover themselves. Well, well, he had had his night's rest at any rate; he would set out again in search of Michael, and see if his hooker had drawn back to the shore. There were a number of heavy-laden smacks riding at anchor beyond the surf, not rigged like the hooker any of them, but Michael might not be very far off.

Finn was standing in the doorway between the outer and inner apartment, staring into the fresh green water, with the sunlight dancing on it, when the bather, who had been assailed in succession by three or four waves of unusual height, grasped at a rope which floated from the steps, and swung himself into view.

“Sure, then, Mr. O’Gee, and is it yourself I see again?” called out Finn, recognizing in

the breeched nakedness coming up the stair the Irish liberator.

"Ah, you blackguard!" puffed O'Gee, emitting a mouthful of salt water and looking anxiously in upon the shelf. "What are you after? How do you come to be here? I see you're Irish. You're a disgrace to Ould Ireland, you are. You'll come to no good. Is it my purse and chain you covet? But, Irish as you may be, I'll fetch a policeman and have you up, if I miss a single sixpence out of a pocket or off that shelf.

"I have told you already," said Finn plaintively, "that I am an exile from Ireland because of my patriotism, and if I had been asked from whom I might expect help in England, it's indeed from yourself, Mr. O'Gee, first of all, that I should have said I expected it. For 'tis it not through you and the speech I delivered at your instance in the market-place of Galport that I am now here, an exile on an inhospitable shore?"

Mr. O'Gee was not without a sense of incongruity. As he stood on his bathing-coach and looked at his rueful countryman haranguing him, he could not choose but smile.

“Now,” he said, “I remember you,” applying a towel to his rubicund body, “and my first advice to you is to remove your clothes and take a bathe. You seem to have something you want to communicate to me. Strip and swim, and I’ll be ready to listen to you. I perceive that you are neither a thief nor a lunatic, though there is a pardonable suspicion of both characters about a man who chooses the means for an interview which you, my friend, have chosen.”

The water was highly tempting to Finn; he accordingly retired into the inner chamber, removed his clothes, and sweeping past the patriot, was presently ascending and descending among the waves, freely swimming beyond the surf into deep water. The refreshment of the sea sent so quick a glow through his body that he delivered himself up to his sensations, and took no thought whatever of the opinion of the early saunterers on the beach.

When he swam back to his coach and ascended the steps, O’Gee was still busy with his shirt studs.

“Now, shake yourself well on the steps, O’Brien,” said the patriot. “There’s not

enough of dryness in the towels here to dry you. You're a pretty fellow, sir, a very pretty fellow indeed, and you swim like a salmon. Nature has designed you from top to toe for fighting the battle of life successfully. But these clothes now—you may get into them for the present, but here's one or two sovereigns to you—I presume you have no money; you can buy yourself a better suit—I lay them aside on this part of the shelf—before you come to me in the forenoon. Brighton abounds with shops, second-hand and otherwise, where you can dress yourself for a consideration. Find one, and come to me to this address." O'Gee gave Finn a card, and had his bathing-coach rolled up the beach, and bidding the lad good-morning left him to find his way to a slop-shop, and from thence to his own rooms overlooking the Parade.

* * * * *

Finn had no difficulty in getting into a better suit of clothes, and when he presented himself at O'Gee's hotel and told a waiter to announce to Mr. O'Gee, member of Parliament for Sherryderry, that Captain O'Brien was

desirous of an interview, the waiter led him at once to his destination.

“Captain O’Brien,” said the man in a loud voice at the patriot’s door, and Finn stepped into a handsome sitting-room, on the drawing-room floor of the hotel, overlooking the sea.

Mr. O’Gee was sitting at a table, on which briefs, blue-books, and letters were piled; he nodded to Finn without speaking, and the lad stood for twenty minutes at the window, looking out upon the street, before a word was exchanged.

The equipages and the riders fairly took away his breath; he was filled with awe and amazement at the ceaseless stream of vehicles, adorned by the trimmest of flunkeys and the most skilful of coachmen. He had never in his most extravagant dreams conceived of the possibility of so many beautiful women being gathered together in one place as he now saw riding, driving, walking at his feet. Once and again he could almost suppose he spied Beatrice Lynch reclining in her carriage, as he saw the same high-bred air and attractive serenity of face in one and another of the ladies driven past the hotel.

And this was England! Poor Galport! Poor Ballybunion! Poor West of Ireland, munching its crusts, and these silver-adorned horses prancing and galloping by the hundred on the very first English shore upon which he set foot!

"Well, *Captain O'Brien*," said O'Gee, rising from his table at length, emphasising the military epithet and looking at Finn from the tip of his boots to the ridge of his brow, "you're indeed a pretty fellow," he said in his rich, genial, Anglified brogue. "Are you in a line regiment, or are you a cavalry man, or is it only a case of a waiter seeing in you an adaptability for military life?"

"I gave him *Captain O'Brien* to announce." Then Finn made some little signals which O'Gee understood so far and seemed to respond to so well that the lad rejoined, "I am a captain of the general's staff of the invisible army of Ireland."

"Oh, indeed," said O'Gee, scrutinising him with a new keenness. "And you are the bearer of some communication to me? And this is the meaning of your hunting me up? Sit down, *Captain O'Brien*. I rather

regret that I did not understand your mission earlier; but for a diplomatist on so important an errand you will admit that you did not put your best foot foremost. And before you proceed to reveal to me what it is that you desire to say I must remind you of two circumstances. In the first place, I am not and never have been a member of a secret society. In the second place, I intend to continue my agitation for the liberation of our dear country on constitutional lines. From which you will deduce the fact that there can be nothing in the nature of an understanding come to between the leader of the invisible army, whose existence I quite understand and appreciate, and the party in parliament which I have the honour of leading."

The seriousness which had come into the face and demeanour of the political leader pleased Finn. He was being treated as he felt he deserved to be, not as a ludicrous Paddy, but as an earnest Irishman, who had early suffered for his convictions, and who was yet willing to suffer more, if need be, in the great cause. But he could not claim to be the go-between for the secret societies and the great orator. He was

not commissioned to arrange anything. He was only sent out of Galport Bay for a month, with no object in particular, except that of swearing in any half-dozen or dozen of his fellow-countrymen he might come across in his voyaging. At the end of his month, the general had predicted that he might safely find his way back to the West, and resume his operations.

O'Gee was waiting for his answer. Finn felt that he expected some leading communications to be made to him. It would not do, he considered, to disappoint him.

"Sir," he said, "though I am not exactly commissioned by the general, of whose staff I am an unworthy member, to set before you a plan of campaign we have adopted against our enemies, I may say that there exists such a plan, and that we are only waiting our opportunity to put it into force."

"We have been waiting for it since Brian Boru," said O'Gee, with a slight accent of sarcasm, adding rapidly, as he appeared to finish his scrutiny of O'Brien, "did you come by Holyhead?"

"Ir. O'Gee, you don't understand what

I've experienced since that day when the authorities of Galport cut me off from my professional prospects. By Holyhead, no; by the deep sea, yes; all the breadth of it, as it seems to me, that covers the globe. And so long have I been tossing upon it, without hope or expectation of ever seeing dry land again, that I declare to you at this moment, I do not know what month of the year we are in, or what day of what month. The short and the long of it is, sir, that I have been, as I said before, expelled my country, rudely, suddenly, and that I have been landed on this shore by the merest accident, that I have no prospects in the meantime, and that, seeing you, I naturally turn to you as the acknowledged father of the Irish people, desiring you to let me know what I should do in such an extremity."

"Poor O'Brien!" said the elder patriot.

"Have you had a breakfast?"

"Yes, before I came in."

"Can you eat oysters?"

"With pleasure."

"Do you care about light wines?"

"I am extremely fond of them."

"Ring that bell, then, for me, and we will

see what they can do for us by way of luncheon."

While the waiter spread a second table for them, they stood looking out upon the triple stream of horsemen and carriages.

"I am filled with amazement," said Finn, "looking down upon that gorgeous array of riders and carriages."

"It's very well," said the politician, "but what is it to Sackville Street from the Gresham?"

"I've never been in Dublin," said Finn, mournfully, "at least not," he added equivocally, "since I was so small that I can hardly remember how the crush in Sackville Street looked."

O'Gee bowed towards a carriage from which a withered old gentleman, closely wrapped up, had made a movement of his hand.

"That's the governor of—at this moment I can't tell you what. He's not much to look at, you think. Perhaps not. He was a better man once in a day, before he rattled from his party and took to governing English dependencies. Guinness his name is, yes. He's governed himself all round the habitable world. Made

such a fuss in the Spice Islands that they had to send him to Jamaica; wasn't two years in Jamaica till he had ironclads ordered out and a rebellion rising; got packed off to Hong Kong, and had to leave in consequence of a round-robin signed by every English resident in his jurisdiction; got taken away to the Sandwich Islands, and from thence to Ceylon. Ceylon has rather taken the 'go' out of him. How d'ye do?"

The politician bowed to another carriage, and another, and Finn felt, standing as he was at his side in full view of the Parade, the contagion of greatness.

"I am bewildered," murmured Finn; "it is all to me like a gorgeous spectacle of a dream. It is so foreign, too, beyond what I could have expected."

"Foreign, you may say that," said O'Gee, looking over his shoulder at the table.

"That, now, is the Austrian Ambassador. These are Russians. The rider now passing is a famous Pole. And these that intervene? These? Oh, they are nobody. They are Mrs. Smith, or Mrs. Jones, or Tom from Manchester, or Harry from Liverpool, or Dick from Glas-

gow, 'paying for an airing. They all come here. How d'ye do? How d'ye do?"

O'Gee knew 'sp many people that he felt it to 'be hard work to stand at a window. A crowned monarch had not more nods to expend in a drive among his subjects than the widely-known patriot.

They sat down at the second table, and O'Gee told the waiter to retire, and with a tall bottle of white wine before him Finn imitated him in pouring out and finishing it, while he swallowed his oysters.

"And you don't know Dublin?" asked O'Gee.

"I've never been—not since——" and this time Finn swallowed his equivocation with an oyster.

"Let me see, you are a Kerry O'Brien, I fancy. What does your father think of your politics?"

"He's dead and gone, Mr. O'Gee, rest his soul! But I have the most devoted mother in Ireland, living on her own property on the Shannon, and it was her wish and desire that I should become Lord Chancellor."

"Well, O'Brien, it's a more comfortable

ambition than a halter ; but it takes some hard work, and a little patience, and one or two other qualifications, to become one of a couple of score of men in a century. Is there no other job from Downing Street that took your mother's fancy ? ”

“ It was a mother's dream, sir,” said Finn, enjoying his wine, and understanding that the patriot was, perhaps, a little sarcastic.

“ Now, O'Brien, my boy, I think I see how the matter stands with you. You are a young fellow not without gifts,—gifts of person that will ingratiate you among the ladies, and gifts of eloquence, as I remember, that may be useful to you in one or other sphere of action, if in the course of time you get into a position for using them. In the meantime take my advice, offered you in all sincerity, and that is, do you cut your connection with the secret societies, do you send in your resignation to your general, telling him that, owing to circumstances over which you have no control, you find you can no more be of any use to the cause.”

Finn's eyes sparkled, he leapt to his feet and brought his knuckles down with an impressive thump upon the table.

"Never, sir, never ! I have suffered, and I am willing to suffer again. The oath I took is enough for me. I am one of the brotherhood, and one of them I shall live and die."

O'Gee was not displeased by his vehemence. On the contrary, he asked him to help himself to some more white wine, and heaped his plate anew with oysters, and pushed the cruet-stand in front of him.

"Well, then, what do you propose to do? So far as I can see, you come to England with rather less preparation for the struggle for existence than many of our poor countrymen who arrive here and succeed. You understand the Fenian code ; well, that is about the worst way of making your bread that I know, for though we have plenty of Fenianism in London and in Brighton, I daresay they are very prudent Fenians indeed, and don't think themselves obliged to recognise a brother, as they would in Kerry or Connemara."

"But I am an educated man, Mr. O'Gee," said Finn with some dignity ; "I am not without knowledge of the classical authors, and I am largely read in the history of our dear country."

"That won't do much for you," interpolated O'Gee.

"And I have given considerable attention to politics."

"Have you written for the papers?"

"I have a little," said Finn, glancing rapidly into his press connection, which consisted of half-a-dozen paragraphs contributed to a weekly sheet printed in the wilds of Mayo.

"There may be some outlet for you if you are skilful," said O'Gee, thoughtfully. Then passing away from personal matters he questioned Finn upon his views about Ireland, asked him for local descriptions of the state of the country, and listened with great attention to his enthusiastic and rolling periods.

He saw that there was the making of an agitator in him, and it so happened that among O'Gee's many schemes for liberating Ireland was one for enlisting the sympathy of the English democracy in its behalf, and the effect of a foaming young patriot he knew to be very considerable in the centres which sent out 'Tom, Harry, and Dick to occupy the carriage way of Brighton. This young fellow seemed to him to have fire, resolution, Fenian-

ism—the latter, he admitted, not a good thing for popular audiences, but as a motive power excellent in its way. When Finn had poured himself out, and the white wine was exhausted, and the oysters swallowed, O’Gee said,

“To start with, O’Brien, you may stick by me. I will give you such employment as will carry you over your earliest difficulties. My private secretary has left me, as you are perhaps aware, having secured the borough of Dun Aengus. You are at liberty to take his place, if you care about it.”

Finn was overpowered with gratitude. It seemed to him that he was lifted into position and fortune at once. Why, all Ireland would hear of the circumstance in no time. He rose and held out his hand to the orator, and exclaimed,

“Sir, you can command my time and my life. My heart is too full for utterance.”

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LETTER.

EILEEN heard from Sister Maria, who had been told of it by Father John, that Mrs. Lynch had received a letter from her son's tutor. Nothing more was told the girl. She thought she would get news of her father if she could see Mrs. Lynch, and as soon as Sister Maria had got into the Nunnery, she rushed up the Tasmania brook, got into the widow's grounds, and made straight for the doorway.

She was surprised to see a footman leaning up against a pillar whom she knew by sight. He was furtively smoking a short, black cutty, and looking down at Eileen, after withdrawing it for a moment, resumed it with a corrugation above his left eyebrow of humour and encouragement.

"Sure then, Dan, and is it you that's keep-in' the widdy's door now?" asked Eileen,

breathless with the rapidity of her movement across the park.

Dan winked and said, "by the token" it was the same.

"Let me in, then, Dan dear, at once. It's Mrs. Lynch I must see this moment. She has news of my father, and I'm dying to hear of him from the lady's lips."

"It's wait ye'll have to do, Eileen Conran. The squire and her is riding over Slieve Innes this morning to the little lord's; you'll have to wait for half an hour or more."

"Did you hear anything of my father, Dan?"

"Nothing, darlin'," said Dan, and the front door opening, half-a-dozen table knives were passed out to him.

"See and put an edge on thim, Dan Rirey," said a table-maid, bare-footed, her gown torn down the left side, and a chased expression in her rolling eyes.

"Troth then, Biddy Machree, but it's the lashing o' work ye give me to do," said the footman, still smoking, and seizing the knives, which he proceeded to polish and sharpen on one of the stone pillars of the porch. It seemed

to be his favourite substitute for a grindstone ; already there was a worn ridge betokening a frequent polishing of cutlery at the same place.

“ Well, then, King Conran’s daughter, and it is not standin’ at the door with Dan, you are out in the could. Come in, we’re all family here.” And Biddy led Eileen within the hall, and straight through the roomy corridors to the back part of the house, looking upon the yard. The kitchen was full of old women, who squatted Indian fashion, from the hearth to the door, each of them having a bowl, a piece of bread, and some fatty substance which made their mouths shine. They were all talking at the same time, and from an explanation of the cook to Eileen, it appeared they were only her aunts from the village of Innes, having their daily meal. If Eileen had gone in at a different hour, she would have seen Dan’s uncles among the pots, or at the coal-cellar ; and at no time during the day was the backyard clear of some more or less distant relative of one or other of Mrs. Lynch’s servants. The popularity of the larder of the mistress of Tasmania was unequalled. There had been nothing like it known in the West.

"Dear me, then," said Eileen, looking up at the rafters, where there were hams swinging, and to the silver covers shining on a rack, "and I've been told that no Irish were ever admitted to Tasmania. Terry, dear, is it you I see?"

And the lady's maid, clad in an old dress of her mistress's, stood looking in at the kitchen door.

"What's that you have in your hand?" asked the cook.

"Sure, it's one o' them haythen images. See if I haven't broken his nose, and where's Dan Rirey with the cement?"

"Well then, what would you put his nose on for? It's as well he looks without it as with it, and ancierter too," said the cook, handing a steaming pan to her relatives.

"Come away with me," said Theresina to Eileen, "and look about you. I'm thinking there's news for you, when Mrs. Lynch comes back."

And Eileen followed the maid into the corridors. "Look about you, now," and Eileen looked about her.

"What would you like to see first?"

“I’m so troubled about poor father that I can’t look at anything and take pleasure in it.”

But Theresina had her into the drawing-room, where the glories of the water-colours on the walls, the silk hangings at the windows, the air of tropical flowers floating in from the conservatory, and the long view across the lawn and the park, arrested her and made her silent.

“Eileen, it’s mad you would go to hear her at the pianny-forty sometimes, Now it’s only last night that she sat down by herself and played and played. We was all in the kitchen at the time, and Driscoll, the butler, he was sittin’ fast asleep—he sleeps sixteen out of the twenty-four hours does Driscoll—when the jigs begun, and Dan he points to Driscoll’s left leg, for it was pawing and toeing the flure, as if it didn’t belong to him at all, but was possessed by the music all of its own accord. We all laughed, but Driscoll slept without wakenin’, and his left leg behavin’ itself like mad. Then cook, at the second jig, what does she do, but up and snap her thumbs and get Dan by the waist and drag him from off on the dresser, to the middle of the flure, and the

coachman, he makes a run upon me, and before we know we're all jiggin' it as fast as feet can shake, till Driscoll, wakenin' with a start, hears the music and sees the bobbin' and snappin', and Biddy in the corner, and he fetches out Biddy, and for a mortal hour there was nothing but dance, dance, dance, till the squire opened the door, and commenced throwing turf into the middle of it—bad luck to him! he's a bad, wild boy."

They had left the drawing-room and gone through the conservatory into a library, where Eileen saw some portraits that struck her fancy. One portrait in particular, a miniature of a lady in the costume of the Revolution period, fingering a harp, struck her. She stood before it fascinated; and asking who it was, she was told that it was an old, ancient grandmother of the family of Lynch, who lived about the time of Brian Boru.

"I have no picture of my mother," said Eileen, "but it's what I believe she was like."

The maid thought Eileen was uppish and presumptuous, so she said, "Oh, that one, that picture—that's only an old woman of the ancient times. That's the major over the

fireplace. But come away upstairs out of the smell of books, and I'll show you the place where she plays the harp to Father John." And they went upstairs to Mrs. Lynch's boudoir, and at the window Eileen saw the snow upon the summit of Slieve Innes and the long, black expanse of country from the rear of the widow's garden to the hill-top.

Theresina replaced the "haythen image" upon its pedestal.

"I think if I turn it sideways into the wall, she'll not notice that the nose is off him." And for Eileen's delectation she brought forward the harp and promiscuously twanged its strings.

"Terry," said Eileen, "it's us that should have the harpers to harp the boys when the great day comes. But how will they ever put the red flame through the roofs of the mansions, if such kindness is inside them as the widdy is showing to you all? I wouldn't be the one to advise a boy to blow his turf below the stack or the door of such a one, no, not I."

"Don't speak so free, Eileen. Driscoll's not one of them, though Dan is, and if he wasn't so lazy he might tell if he heard, and kind if she

is, the widdy's capable of makin' a clean sweep, if her blood is up. Yes, that's her oratory. She's as holy as nothing at all, with her relics. But you would die of laughin' to see her count her beads, you would. She's always missin' them, and then she'll throw them in a corner and sit down and twang, twang, or go to the pianny and jig. I believe that's her feet upon the stair. Hide, Eileen. Hide. Out at that door, and it'll lead you to the top ov the stair."

"No, I won't hide. I am here to see her and speak to her. God save you, madam, I heard that you had received intelligence about my dear father, and I made bold to call on you and ask you what it is you have heard."

Mrs. Lynch was standing in the doorway with her whip in one hand her hat in the other, and her burnished hair shining upon her head with a lustre; she laughed as she saw Eileen, and held out her hand frankly to her.

"Oh yes, indeed, Eileen, I have news if you will sit down and listen to it. I hope Sin has been good to you. Sin, Sin, what is this? Apollo's nose broken, and you have turned him round that I may not see him? Is there

any other little projection, any little corner of a mantel-piece, any knob of a door, any handle of a dish or jug, anything that can be split or cracked that you think you can leave me? How is it things take to crumbling to pieces, as if there were a law of deterioration in my house? And speak to Mullen about my saddle, when you go down; the stirrup was fastened with whipcord, and vilely fastened, so that I might as well have ridden to Lord Mountinnes's bareback. Sit down, Eileen; run away, Morris. No, this is not a new 'gyurl.' I know you have not seen her before. Run away with Sin, and see if you can protect the knobs and corners. You will be anxious to hear me read, Eileen."

"I am, madam," said Eileen, painfully straining towards Mrs. Lynch, who unlocked a desk, took out a letter, five sheets long, closely written, and with the violet light in her eyes shining upon the page, and her hand slightly trembling, she turned over the leaves.

"It is from Mr. O'Brien, Eileen. He gives me a full account of his doings since he was expelled his country. You will be glad to

hear that he has become a parliamentary secretary. Or, perhaps you did not know him very intimately? I think he has been very fortunate to secure so good a place at the outset. He will be a great deal with Mr. O'Gee, and it will take him into public life, which will suit him very well. We shall hear of him in Parliament before long, no doubt. Now let me see, I shall read you about the journey to England."

"Madam, I am not able to wait for a little at a time. Go on to where he tells of my father, Michael Conran."

"To be sure, you are interested in that most of all. Ah, I shall come to it presently. Listen to this, however." And Mrs. Lynch read a couple of pages, in which Finn, imitating the style of the late Mr. Burke, described the passage of the hooker from the south of Ireland to the south of England. His periods were in a stormy style to indicate the behaviour of the waves, and Eileen, with sparkling eyes, said, "Michael, my father, would be in his element. He's the proud and bold seaman."

"In his element," said the widow meditatively, and searching from page to page for an

allusion. But she could find none. It was as if the youth had steered the hooker to Brighton beach all by himself. There was no mention of Michael at all.

"No news is good news, Eileen, and I find Mr. O'Brien has no news to tell me of your father. But, obviously, if he has got so well placed himself, he will not have neglected your father."

"He might have said a word about him, and not have treated him as a puppy dog and of no consequence at all."

"No doubt he will tell others of your father. I did not know him, Eileen. Mr. O'Brien would conclude that I was not interested in him, which, I need hardly say, is not true. But ah! here is a line, only one line, and it is not so well with him as I thought. 'Through the raging surf, with musical instruments blowing and roaring, I ascended,' he says, 'the street, thinking it was Valencia, or Genoa, or some of the southern cities I had read of in books. It was Brighton. My comrade went back to his hooker, and when, an hour later, I returned to him, the hooker was gone!' So your father had put to sea again."

“ Oh, I hope that nothing has befallen him among the English! On the sea he would be safe.”

“ The English are quite a good-natured sort of people,” said Mrs. Lynch, smiling, “ and your father would have nothing to fear, Eileen, from them.”

But Eileen’s face fell, and the tears rolled over her cheeks. She declined to listen to any more of Mr. O’Brien’s eloquence, and begged to be allowed to slip away.

A little disappointed, Mrs. Lynch let her go, and returned to the five sheets to read them over again from the commencement.

CHAPTER XX.

THE MISSION.

WHO would O'Brien write, Eileen asked herself, about her father? She thought of going straight to Loughan to see Father John. He would be likely to have a letter; but first of all, on the way, she would take the American miller. He was General, and O'Brien was Captain O'Brien of his staff—that she knew; he would very likely tell her everything. How stupid of her not to think of him before Mrs. Lynch, she told herself, as she went down to the city in the twilight. The miller was not at his hotel nor in his office in the square, but a junior member of his staff was seated at a desk in the latter place. He rose and told the girl that the general had important letters from England, and that O'Brien was among the English, and, though pursued from his own country, that he was not likely to be touched,

the laws not being the same there as in the West.

“Mother of God,” said the girl, in anguish, “is it only of O’Brien that I am to hear? Was not my father on board the hooker? Did not my father sail to England? And is the king of the Claddagh nobody?” But the girl went down to the mill by the river-side, and in the gathering darkness of that desolate spot sought out the miller’s room.

She had an eerie feeling as she stepped into the lower chamber above the rushing lode, where the full sacks were ranged like silent dwarfs capable of rising up in hostility against her. She wound out and in a pathway softened with patches of meal, so that she could not hear her own footsteps. She coughed, and the echo of her own voice had a ghostly sound among the dry rafters, and seemed to startle a bat, for there was a noise of wings at an open window. Eileen shut her eyes; it was dreadful to her, the silence and the feeling of ghostly supervision. Then she approached the window, and looking up a ladder-like flight of steps, she saw the red ray of a candle through the chinks of the door. She stood listening

but heard no sound—nothing except the tumbling water below the mill-wheel and the flutter at the window of a returning bat. But she put her feet on the first dark step and went up. Thank Heaven, she heard her own footsteps, and presently the miller up above, hearing them, came to the head of the stairs, candle in hand, and held it aloft.

“Welcome, welcome,” he cried in a nasal voice, holding out his hand to her, as she reached the floor above.

He was a ghostly looking object in the thin light cast over the upper floor by a couple of candles, dressed as he was in white tweed from top to toe. But Eileen was glad to see him, and told him so, as she followed him through the partition which formed the side of his room.

He set her in his leather-covered chair, and seating himself on the edge of the desk, taking at the same time a cigar from a case, he lit it and smoked affably, looking down on her.

“You know what it is I have come for?”

“Yes, I guess I do. You want to hear something about Michael.”

Eileen rose, with an air of anxious expect-

ancy, breathless, and with her hand upon the desk, looked into his face.

"My dear, dear father," she murmured.

"Your good and trusty father is safe, Eileen, as safe as you and I are at this moment. This is a letter from Captain O'Brien. You don't read. It's not very long; but there's enough in it to keep your mind and mine at rest. Michael's safe."

Eileen crossed herself, and sitting down again gave utterance to a little prayer of thanksgiving. "It's all I wanted to know," she said, with tears of thankfulness in her eyes.

O'Brien had told Gorton what he had told Father John and Mrs. Lynch, that Michael had been lost to him on the beach of Brighton. But it suited Gorton to tell Father John that he had heard of Michael later on from a town in the neighbourhood of Brighton, and the same story he now repeated to Eileen.

"Your father can do better for the cause by working where he is. He will remain away for some time. Don't be surprised if the Claddagh should ask another king before he returns. It may not, but it may; and anyhow you will accept events as they may happen in his absence."

Eileen was so pleased and relieved by the news of her father's safety that she only replied, "Surely, surely. And what's a parliamentary secretary?" she asked, thinking of Mrs. Lynch's letter from Finn.

"I thought you didn't read," said Gorton suspiciously.

"Nor neither do I, but I went to Tasmania to hear if there were any word of Michael, and that's what the widdy said Captain O'Brien had become."

"Damn the widow, if I may say so. He's corresponding with her, is he? How is it, Eileen, that, unlike you and me, all the others seem to have interests of their own apart from Ireland? Now I could understand you and me corresponding, if you were a reader and a writer and I were away; I could understand my falling in love with you and your returning it."

"I couldn't, then," said Eileen, uneasily, rising to her feet, and preparing to go.

Gorton bit at his cigar, and threw a glance of admiration over her, which she declined to return with any reciprocal glances of geniality or gratitude.

Gorton came down from his desk, put his

hands on her shoulders, and pressed her into her chair.

“Eileen, our cause depends a great deal, as you know, upon you and your father, and the men sworn into the service immediately surrounding my person. Now there are times when we have to make our peace with the enemy. There’s Larry O’Shee”—Eileen’s face crimsoned and her lips moved—“he has taken service with an Englishman, that he may the better betray him and his when the day comes. Larry, as you know, is back to the Barracks with his master.”

Eileen leapt to her feet and made a shrill exclamation in Irish, which Gorton did not understand. Nor could he interpret its meaning from her face. It might be anger or gladness; he was not sure which.

“Back from Bermudas?” she asked.

“They never went there at all. Larry’s master exchanged into the regiment and came to Ireland, for what reason Larry don’t know, and I don’t know, but do you, Eileen, happen to know?”

“No,” said the girl, faintly enough, “I don’t.”

“Then we are safe, and I can go on to tell you that you have been appointed, I may say by the vote of the whole of that Ireland which is in America, to one of the most important missions that has ever been undertaken. Wait a minute.”

The miller lit a couple of additional candles, placed two of them on wooden brackets, took one in his hand, disappeared, and came back with something in his hand which seemed to Eileen to be a mantle lined with silk.

“Stand up, Eileen. I am deputed to do this thing by those who are arranging for the future of this country. Stand up, and let me envelop you in the flag of the future, which, when it is unfurled, will liberate our tired millions from the hand of the foe.”

Eileen stood up, and the miller threw the flag of the Sunburst over her, as if it were a cloak, and drawing the folds tight round her, he said, “Now you are consecrated to the cause as you were not before. You belong to us now as Joan of Arc belonged to France, when the same foes that we war against to-day were warring against France. Eileen, take that light in your hand, and let me see you walk

from end to end of this corridor, and seem to think that you see one of the regiments of the invisible army, and that you are bearing your message from the general to it."

Eileen carried the light to the end of the corridor, pacing slowly as she went, and as she returned in the same manner, her face lit up by a triumphant smile, Gorton approached, bent on one knee and kissed her hand.

"No, now, general, you confuse me when you pay me attentions of that kind. Tell me what it is I am to do."

"You are to carry the flag of the Sunburst over Ireland."

"Over Ireland? It's not very far I could go with it about me without being seen and taken to gaol."

"You are to carry it, Eileen, over Ireland, and at the word of command you must prepare yourself, all by yourself, to set out. The invisible army require a sign, and that sign I make to them in the name of American Ireland, through you, the bearer of the standard. I shall put a map in your hand, and from valley to valley, as you find it marked, you will proceed northwards, westwards, and south

again to Galport. In every marked hamlet you will find a friend who will show you what we are doing, and who will see in your person what is going to happen. This mission, Eileen, is a great and holy honour. Thousands of girls in Ireland would give their lives for the opportunity."

"Cheerfully would I die for the cause," said Eileen, tightening the folds of her mantle and following the silky outline of the Sunburst with her forefinger.

Again Gorton lifted her hand to his lips.

"No, then," repeated Eileen, withdrawing, "the flag I take, and the mission I take, but, nothing more. Pity me the day, sir, can a poor girl not be let alone?"

"You must be prepared for love and affection, Eileen. A princess of Ireland."

"A poor fisher-girl who loves her country, general, and will sacrifice all for it if needful."

"So far all is good. You will leave the flag with me. But before you go I have again to warn you. Larry O'Shee will call on you it may be, if any movement depends upon you knowing. Have nothing to do with Larry's master; the cause does not require it of you."

"Light me down through the flour sacks ; my heart is carrying a great burden away with it. To take the flag through Ireland ! Proud, proud am I this night. And my dear father safe and working for the cause."

"I guess," said Gorton, looking after her, as she sped down the river-side and across the lade, "there's something more than that making you jump. Jerusalem ! but I don't care. If he comes between her and me, I shall make him swallow the hardest pill mixed in these parts."

* * * * *

It was with a light heart enough that Eileen sped from the mill to the Claddagh, and as she reached the outskirts of her village uninterrupted she stood overlooking the valley through which the Tasmania brook murmured its way to the shore. She stood for a moment looking across the valley upon the high walls of the Nunnery. All round about it to-night the air was nimble and violet ; the invading breakers on the shore fell softly, and the whole scene was softly scrutinised by a young moon with a star in the curve of its sickle. The breath of the evening was nearly as mild as in midsummer,

and as Eileen descended the pathway to the bridge she took off her cloak and threw it over her arm. On the low parapet of the bridge a man was seated, wrapped from neck to heels in a military cloak. There was light enough to show her it was Jeffery, and again the cry with which she had surprised Gorton escaped from her lips.

He rose from his place, and in another moment the twain were as one, he clasping her to his breast, she clinging to his shoulder while their faces met.

"Oh, I didn't know I loved you so much," she exclaimed, as he released her for a moment and held her at arm's length. "Sorrow, sorrow, I didn't know it," and again she convulsively clung to his shoulder, while they kissed each other. And as they stood side by side for a time, looking into the dawdling brook, and out through the fastnesses of the rocks to the tumbling sea, they remained quite silent. But when the nuns within the high wall set up their evening chant, his hand closed upon hers, and like little children they interchained their fingers and listened.

"You didn't know how much you loved me,

little one. Nor did I how much I loved you, till I felt that going beyond the sea I was leaving you out here to your wild life, all by yourself. And now, Eileen, I have something to tell you about our love. If you are not exactly a princess, you are at least the proprietor of a great estate, and you must no longer think that in allowing me to love you I am condescending. It is the other way. I find that you are judged by the best lawyers to be the real inheritor of the Tasmania estates, and in time, I hope to be able to have you restored to your own. It is this which has brought me back, Eileen, to the West, that you may be restored to your own."

Eileen said nothing but kept a tight hold of his hand. "Sorrow the day," she broke out, and they sat down together on the parapet, half facing each other.

"Why should there be sorrow in it?"

"Oh it's all, all so sad and impossible. And I love you, and I have no right, and I see no end."

"But I can see an end to it. I see you and me married, Eileen, and a long day of happiness dawning for both of us."

“And what about poor Ireland? And Michael? And the Church?”

He did not understand her.

“I shall be content,” he said, “when I have led you back to the home of your fathers, but whether the law help you to your own or not, there is nothing for me but your companionship, Eileen, nothing but your love to keep me up.”

“Oh, but you don’t know the dangers and the difficulties.”

“There’s no such word as danger for me.”

“Yes, indeed, there is then. There is danger for every man who comes here now—with the oppressor’s uniform on—there’s great danger. And we’re all watching our opportunity.”

“Watch away, Eileen; so long as we can stand here, and hear the nuns chanting and the sea tumbling, and look up at the friendly stars, and measure the beating of our hearts—what care I, what should you care, for difficulties and dangers?”

And taking her cloak in his hand, he led her, too, by the hand, by a side path to the shore, telling her as he went, that, for his sake, she

would begin to learn from the nuns to read and write, and that when his plans were complete, he would come for her and bear her off to be his wife.

The girl gave herself up without restraint to her happiness. She had never loved before; all else was blotted out of her heart—her father, her flag of the Sunburst, her past, her future. As he wrapped her in his own cloak and looked out upon the sea, she felt that for her love was enough.

CHAPTER XXI.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

CAPTAIN JEFFERY, in pursuance of his military studies, rode one forenoon along the highroad to Loughan. This morning he was conducting an irregular march against the Irish guerillas who were breaking in upon him, shooting and retiring; he had driven them back to Loughan, and he had utilized every barn and farmhouse knoll and bog along his ride. Then he came upon the Catholic chapel. How should it be utilized, supposing, as might happen, the guerillas had won a temporary advantage? He tied his horse's head to the broken gate at the entrance of the little churchyard, and walked over the flagstones to see how a Catholic chapel might be utilized in the event of such a guerilla success.

He stood in the porch for a moment to make sure that Paddy was properly secured to the

gate; then he went in, and contrary to his expectation he saw that the priest was still at work. He did not see the priest, but he heard him talking from some invisible nook behind the altar. Then the sounds of a harmonium, nicely tuned and very soft and melodious in all its notes, began to assert itself from the same place of concealment. The captain looked up at the waxen statue of the Virgin, gazing down with immovable eyes upon the pews, and he took off his hat. The harmonium was playing the Kyrie Eleison, and the pathos of the melody so caught and held the captain that he forgot about his fortifications and his guerillas, and gave himself up to unrestrained listening.

At his elbow the pew ran into a window with diamond panes, which overlooked the Lough. The water was dark, with here and there a little patch of mist upon it, but the birds were wheeling round and above it, glad of the breaking vision of sunlight which had descended upon it. Jeffery edged up to the window and stood looking out. The music stopped, and Father John's voice exclaimed from behind the altar,

“And a more impressive mass, madam, will never have been said upon these shores since Mochuda wandered over them, than you will assist us in observing this blessed Christmas-tide.”

“Indeed, I hope so, Father John,” replied the voice of Mrs. Lynch, adding, “but, dear father, what is it in me that will not, cannot understand the new life, the being born again, don’t you know, and which keeps me from feeling to-day the least bit of difference from what I felt the other day, when I was only a Protestant and on the way to perdition?”

“Oh, you feel more than you know,” said the priest; “I judge it from the seraphic fervour which you throw into your music.”

“Indeed, that’s nothing but bewilderment and anxiety and the feeling that life is almost too much for me. There are so many things in it that one doesn’t expect. Why, even now it seems to me so odd that I, an English woman, should be preparing music for your parishioners on the shores of a wild Irish lough—so odd, so quite unlike what I had thought and dreamt of as a girl, before and after I married Major Lynch. Ah, Father

John, what a great deal has happened since I left my own father's house at Chatham, where I had a little brother who said he loved me very much, but went away to India, or somewhere, and after the first year never wrote again. And he may be dead and gone for aught I can tell. Like enough he is, and I reproach myself for knowing nothing of him and he of me. I have been obliged to think of him because his memory has been forced on me by meeting a Captain Jeffery, who is said to be so like myself that he might be a brother. He might be, yes, if I had been a Jeffery before I married the major. But I was not, I was a Neville——”

“The girl's at the confessional,” murmured the captain to himself in confusion, going softly down the rude aisle and out at the porch. “Merciful heavens!” he exclaimed, “it's assuredly my little sister; a Neville I should think you were, and it is no wonder that I should be at a loss to discover in the magnificent Beatrice Lynch the little Totty Neville, blue-eyed, to be sure, fiery-headed, no doubt, that went out of sight, out of mind all these years ago. Why, Totty, to be sure. Well,”

he went on musing, as he mounted Paddy again, and struck a spur into him, "it has come to a curious pass. I must fall in love with a girl on Galport beach, and have her claims to a property fished up from the Bay, and feel myself compelled to become her knight-errant, and the dragon I have to slay is after all a despised little sister."

He rode with savage haste into the Lough country, wheeling round plantations of firs, past extinct lead chimneys, old castles, and villages until, with the foam falling in flakes from his jaws, Paddy drew up dead-beat, and declined to run any farther. Then the captain's thoughts adjusted themselves, and turning Paddy towards the city again, he threw the reins on his neck and let him go as he pleased. Late as it was in the year, the air was sweet and agreeable, and gradually it began to seem to the captain that, after all, to have discovered a sister was not such a bad thing.

He was riding at the edge of a roadside mere, whose floating islands were still leafy with the stunted oak, and beyond which the walls of white mansions, hovered over by crows,

showed at the foot of a hill, with the lustre of turnips and rape in its fields.

Mrs. Lynch presently cantered into view unattended, on the same road as himself.

She drew up, seeing Captain Jeffery, and her horse came on at a walk; it was only the feeling of his relationship that hindered the captain from seeing that the widow was not so nicely mounted as she had been some weeks ago, even though the horse was the same. Involuntarily he touched his hat as he leant over to shake hands with her; Paddy pranced as their fingers met, and they were wheeled away from each other. Both resented the circumstance, feeling for the moment that the bridled ones had the stronger wills; then they stood together facing the mere.

"You come so far along, unattended?" asked the captain, in a voice so new to him that Mrs. Lynch, glancing sideways at him, and stroking the neck of her horse, made certain he was about to add himself to the list of suitors who had asked her hand.

"Why not?"

"Only that blunderbusses go off sometimes."

“ Ah, not for such as me. I am as Irish as the sister of Milesius, and quite popular hereabouts. The people rather like than dislike me.”

Jeffery answered her with his eye, and spite of himself felt the bond of brotherhood to her. She was so perfectly graceful and fresh in her saddle that he had to acknowledge that the sister did him credit.

“ How is the colonel ? ” she asked, intending to check by her abruptness the curious look of affection in the young officer’s face.

“ Why, Totty Neville, is it possible that you don’t recollect me ? ” he asked, looking keenly into her face.

A wave of surprise passed through blood and brain, but the only symptom of it was a tightening of the reins on her horse’s neck. The horse resented it and reared ; it took Mrs. Lynch some moments to bring him back to restfulness.

“ You are Arthur, I should think.”

“ You knew it then,” said Jeffery, greatly more agitated than his sister. “ I think,” he continued, “ that after all these years I shouldn’t mind kissing my grown sister, and saying that she surpasses all my expectations.”

“No, thank you. A brother who goes away and chooses to forget that he has a sister, and who, without the excuse of marriage, changes his family name, must offer some explanations before he can hope to resume his rights. Indeed, I recognise no rights, Captain Jeffery, none in the world, till you tell me why you are Jeffery.”

“I suppose you didn’t know you had an uncle in Devonshire called Jeffery?”

“Never heard of him.”

“You had, however, Sir Jervoise Neville Jeffery, and old Jack Jeffery—the surgeon-major—gave me the option of taking an income and changing my name. ‘What’s in a name?’ asks an authority; so I suppressed the Neville, took the income, and old Jack obligingly died very soon after he made his will, in India.”

“Arthur, it was not a glorious deed. I hope you have fought battles or something. Selling your good name to please an old uncle, and our poor father, I recollect quite well, hated——”

“You have a better memory than I have, then.”

"Very likely. There are things we women never, never forget, and among them our father's enmities. But did you fight battles?"

"How could I? It's all luck fighting, and my luck has been bad. I've always happened to be amongst a contented, mean-spirited people when war was going on elsewhere. Bloodthirsty sister, I don't know what it is to have cut off even a nigger's head."

But Beatrice did not laugh. She only said, "I have become very serious of late years. The burden of life is very heavy, and I am attempting to be religious. They say it helps one. It is much in my mind, and I am reading O'Gee's speeches and a volume upon the duties of landlords. They make me yawn occasionally; but I know some day I shall find everything clear."

Captain Jeffery thought of Eileen's law-suit, which he was proposing to promote, and looked remorsefully at his sister.

"You have not said a word to express your pleasure at finding a brother," he said, meaning her to believe that if she had troubles, she might bring them to him.

"No, not as yet."

"I don't reveal myself to you as a broken-down scamp. I am senior captain of the —th, with what the Yankees call a good record, and that sort of thing."

"No, you don't look like a scamp, Arthur. Not at all, not the least. Do you like the Irish?" she added, as half-a-dozen girls, with shoes hung on their arms, evidently returned from their autumn work in England, passed them on the road, and looked at them and made curious comments.

"I don't mind telling you that—yes, I do—well, I rather like some of them."

"Now, I shall take some time to realise what has happened. I have come out here to call upon my neighbours in the manor-house behind the mere. You shall come to me at Tasmania and tell me what has happened in the interval since you called me Totty and I called you Arthur."

She bowed to him gravely and rode down the ruts of a quagmire to pay her visit.

Jeffery went soberly back to the Barracks.

THE RED ROUTE

OR

SAVING A NATION

THE RED. ROUTE

OR

Saving a Nation

BY

WILLIAM SIMÉ

AUTHOR OF "KING CAPITAL," "TO AND FROM" ETC.

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CHAPTER I.

SECRETARYSHIP.

FINN stayed some weeks in Brighton, and got the first and only instalment of money he ever received from Mr. O'Gee during his connection with him. Nominally he was invested in an income of four hundred a year; really, he had nothing. But, as O'Gee told him on his way up to London, it was a great comfort to a man in his position to have a young gentleman connected with the land in the capacity of secretary. Not that he, O'Gee, had any feeling about the inequality of Irishmen. God knew that a mercantile assistant, a labourer in the fields, a fisherman from the shores were all open to such employment about his person, if they had knowledge and political talent. But London was a place which demanded tact

and presence in a secretary, and when a secretary had a mother who owned an estate, and who, no doubt, would be willing to make an ample allowance for his support, it was very satisfactory all round. Finn thought ruefully, if affectionately, of his poor mother's well kept little farm of a few acres, and sighed ; but as, at the moment, he was in no want of money, he felt no very poignant regrets at the prospect of its continued absence. He believed he would be certain to get along somehow. He was so excited at the prospect of being in London at all, that he had no room in his mind for anything but extravagant and glowing expectation. He was not a little confused at the great station of Victoria, where they stopped, and where there was so much Saxon shouting, pushing, and confusion. In the midst of it all, however, and while a porter was wheeling O'Gee's luggage and a portmanteau of his over to a cab, he heard some bystanders call out the patriot's name. Everybody seemed to know him, and Finn straightened himself to a swagger as he followed O'Gee to a cab. His astonishment was increased when the porter's head inserted

itself at the window and in broad Hibernian accent exclaimed, "More power to your arm, Mr. O'Gee, sir."

"The cause is good," replied the patriot promptly.

"Keppel Street," shouted the porter, and the cabman drove away to Bloomsbury, going out through the gates with a blaze of light and among such a crush of vehicles as even Brighton had not boasted.

"They talk about the West being overpopulated; what is it to this!" exclaimed Finn.

"What indeed!" said his companion, finishing the remains of a flask which he had filled with spirits for their brief journey. "But then there's always money circulating here—plenty of it, O'Brien."

"It would be desirable to get hold of some of it," said Finn, lost in contemplation of the rushing curricles, the high green-and-yellow omnibuses, the interchange of shouting, and the passengers on the sideways.

"Quick now," said O'Gee, "put your head out and look at Westminster—that's the Abbey, with some of Ireland's noblest dust

among its stones; those are the Houses of Legislature farther along; the Thames lies beyond. Ah! O'Brien, Legislation, and Administration of Justice, and Kings in their tombs—Kings of Literature, Art, and Science—Kings of Men,—it's a great story, my boy, one that is calculated to make young blood tingle in its veins. We can't stop to look at it or moralise upon it to-night. If you stay here and succeed, you will see more of it by-and-by. Here now is a magnificent street, ducal houses to the right—the Queen herself lives in a palace beyond the park that lies behind these public offices."

Finn said nothing, and nothing was said till they drove into Trafalgar Square. It was a bright, frosty evening, and the moon was shining over the square and upon the great pillared front of the National Gallery.

"The great paintings of Europe hang inside these walls, O'Brien, the pilferings of many old churches. You will sometimes go in and stand before a Raphael, or a Murillo, and feel a new pride in the fact that Ireland alone keeps up the traditions that can produce such art. Only religion, my boy, in the highest sense,"

said O'Gee, who seemed to Finn to be speaking, but who was actually shouting, "in the sense that it is known and understood among the Catholic populace of Ireland, will ever give us pictures like these again. They think and talk as if the prowling hag, Science, will yet find us such. Not at all. This is a curious place we are now in, O'Brien, the Seven Dials. Many of our poor countrymen live and thrive and multiply here."

"It has a homely sort of appearance," said Finn, who looked out upon three brass balls on a wall, and a small crowd, visibly Irish, going to and fro beneath them. Presently they were in Oxford Street, and turning into Tottenham Court Road were not long in having their luggage and themselves deposited at the Keppel Street door. Finn thought the erect little woman, with a cap and ribbons, and a shrill voice, not very genial in her reception. Why, if the patriot had gone in at any door in the West, he would have been welcomed with effusive expressions of thanks and gratitude. This chill erectness had no word of welcome, but only opened a door on the lowest floor and screamed for a servant, who, very dirty and

unkempt, looked over the banisters, with a broom in hand. Mr. O'Gee owed the landlady a quarter's rent, which probably had something to do with the absence of enthusiasm on her part; but Finn did not know that, and if he did, he would not have realised that for a paltry debt any one could have been so mean-spirited as to show it in his or her manner.

Mrs. O'Gee and the children were at Kingston, so for a night or two Finn was told he could accommodate himself at Keppel Street, until he had found such rooms for himself as he cared to occupy. The Bloomsbury neighbourhood abounded in advantageous rooms, he was told, and it was desirable that he should be within easy reach of Mr. O'Gee; on the Monday following he could go out about and satisfy himself.

Finn felt very proud and exuberant that first night of his arrival, for there were several letters awaiting him, one from Father Hugh, one from Mrs. Lynch, one from Sister Maria, in the name of Eileen Conran, and one from General Gorton. O'Gee handed the bunch over to him, with the remark,—

C "I hope you have no compromising secrets,

Mr. O'Brien; one, at least, of these letters has been read, or I am much mistaken."

It was Gorton's; but there was nothing very compromising in it. It told O'Brien that the mill was now in excellent working order, that the miller had more than one agency in London, and that his representative would find Finn out, and probably give him something to do. And he expected that Finn would not forget the service in which he had enlisted; it was added in a P. S. that nothing was to be written home about Michael Conran. Sister Maria's letter was only a short note, embodying Eileen's wish to know everything in detail which had occurred to her father on board the hooker, and expressing a hope that Mr. O'Brien was none the worse for his long sea journey. Father Hugh's was written in the name of his mother, and contained advice to him to immediately become connected with the Catholic Church of his neighbourhood, that in such a connection alone would he find a safeguard against the innumerable temptations of a residence in London, and that the enclosed letter, to a friend of his own, at a part of London called Brompton, would ensure

him a welcome. Father Hugh expressed his pleasure that Finn had been so happily attached to one so distinguished as Abraham O'Gee, a man for whose abilities he had the very highest regard, though he did not believe that professional patriotism was the path that Ireland had to tread, if it were bent upon prosperity and religion. Still, for Finn's sake, he believed the connection to have been of Providence's own devising, and he trusted that in God's own good time he would be put on the way of life best suited to his tastes and talents. Father Hugh ended with his blessing and assurance that Mrs. O'Brien bore up bravely under the news of Finn's expulsion from the college, and that the whole neighbourhood had devoted itself to little offices of kindness in her behalf, being touched by the account of her son's departure by sea.

Mrs. Lynch's letter was an answer to Finn's long descriptive epistle; it was shorter than he would have liked it to be. But he almost literally devoured it, as he sat in the bedroom at the top of the Keppel Street house, reading and rereading it. The faint violet aroma, even more than the words, seemed to summon

before him the widow in all her beauty and benigance. The letter itself ran :—

“MY DEAR MR. O'BRIEN, —I do not mind saying that your letter lifted a great load from my heart. I was exceedingly anxious to know that your rickety boat had got ashore safely, and during the stormy nights I lay awake several times wondering where it might be. Now that you are in England, of course, you are safe. In London, I believe, you are eminently safe. You will find, I am sure, that what alarms the authorities here does not alarm them in London. I fancy you may talk anything anywhere, and no one will very much care. London is so loyal to London, so national within its own bounds, and feels it so difficult to take seriously anything that goes on outside the nation of London, that every refugee is safe in it. He may be neglected, or he may become a curiosity, as he has a mind to. No doubt you will prefer neglect for some little time. The story of your hardship at sea—did the pilot suffer much?—touched me exceedingly. Father John has pointed out to me how noble, how truly religious it is to be willing to die, for one's country, though I wish, for your own sake, that you, and others, did not so much insist upon the West being your country and all that is worth living for. However, I am now so far of your way of thinking that I believe, until something has been done for everybody out here, every Irishman ought to feel that it is his country, and that he owes loyalty to no party, or throne, or government till its condition is altered. I

am afraid this is sad treason. My brother tells me it is. But it is the truth, and in throwing my house and grounds open to my own tenants, I am beginning to do a little for the cause espoused by your leader, Mr. O'Gee. I am one of those who believe in Mr. O'Gee. I think you have been so fortunate in becoming attached to him in so curious and romantic a way. It seems impossible to believe, at this time of day, that events can proceed as you describe them. At prosy old Brighton, the watery suburb of London, it seems hard to believe such a meeting could take place. Now I have written enough. As for your protestations, my dear Mr. O'Brien, of esteem and even something more robust, believe me I accept them as one at least three years your senior may be permitted to accept them. I shall watch your career with great interest, and when I come to town in the summer I shall hope to see something of you. Morris asks me to send his love to you. He is quite a little savage; I cannot tame him. I think of sending him to a public school in England. He gets beyond me. '

"Sincerely yours,

"BEATRICE LYNCH."

Mr. O'Gee was in high good humour that evening, and called Finn down from his bedroom among the eaves, and was especially so when the lad showed him the letter from Mrs. Lynch.

"Upon my word, Sir Jonah who came out

of the whale's belly, it's one of the finest matches in Ireland. I knew the late Major Lynch well—well, sir, and it's a curious circumstance if these estates are not worth a good three thousand a year. Mr. Secretary, I congratulate you, indeed, upon your friendship; the widow is what an older generation would have called a toast, and a toast, sir, she shall be, if you hand me that copper kettle. I find a little Jamaica rum and hot water a good thing just before going to bed, notwithstanding that the doctors say there is too much sugar in 'it for an elderly man's constitution. But the quantity of sweetness required for the desert air of politics is more than you can imagine. I drink to your Mrs. Lynch, with cordiality and congratulation."

"I thank you, sir, from the bottom of my heart," said Finn, also drinking a little of the West Indian decoction, and looking round the tall apartment, which was sparsely lit by one great lamp. There was a bassinette upside-down in a corner, a hobby-horse with a wooden young gentleman on his back was in a fixed condition of gallop at the open door of an inner room; a sideboard was heaped with

documents tied up with red tape ; the windows, opening on to a balcony overlooking the street, showed numerous flower-pots without flowers.

“ If you would pull down the blinds, O’Brien, we would be more comfortable. I have a great deal of work to overtake to-morrow, as you may see from that crowded sideboard ; and before we separate you’d better understand some of your duties. Well, my practice in the courts or in consultation is not always accompanied by fees. Clients are dilatory,—clients of our own country notoriously so,—and in these cases I would like you to jog up their memory with an occasional letter, if not with a personal interview. But that is the least part of your duty. The state of Irish party politics is such, that you will, when it is known you are my secretary, be constantly solicited for news of my intentions by representatives of the press. With regard to that, I must advise you to cultivate a dark demeanour. If you will pardon me for making the remark, O’Brien, you have an appearance of greenness which is by no means part of your character. That will be a considerable assistance to you. The mask of ingenuousness, when it is well worn, is

as effective as any other—more so, in fact, and more pleasant to look upon; and even if people learn to disbelieve in ingenuousness as an indication of character, they regard it leniently as rather a pretty kind of peculiarity. Well, in putting yourself in relationship to those who are curious to know the moves in our game, you are safe to give such ingenuous answers as occur to you, but never give the whole truth at any one time; indeed, I may say that you will never be permitted to know the whole truth, which is a condition of mind that will often save you from committing yourself. But dole out what of it you do know in homœopathic doses. If it were not that you are a man of property, a pretty little income could be made by paragraphing my intentions for Fleet Street consumption. However, London is an expensive place to live in, and you may find it judicious to augment your means in that way. They are, I flatter myself, rather interested in my intentions at present, as I am carrying our constitutional war of Irish liberation into England. We are numerically, O'Brien, but a handful, but we are potent at that, for every man is a speaker from the

cradle upwards, and no member of my party has any interest, if it be not remotely and at intervals a fat picking, which is one of the accidents which must occur among a needy following like Ireland. On the whole, however, we are at present in a great way, as you know. Well, you will understand that I have a large correspondence. Fetch me that tea-box from the other room. These—you see what has been accumulating—are three weeks' accumulation. To-morrow you may open and arrange them somewhat in this order. You will find, I should suppose, in a collection like that, five-and-twenty from Sherryderry. Probably none of them require an answer now. A good fifty will be tradesmen's threats, and a good rule for letters of that sort is 'tear in two, and put in waste-paper basket!' In fact, until you are otherwise instructed, you may destroy every account you see, even as you would put your foot upon a cockroach upon that floor. Some of these letters may be from Dublin solicitors. Open all such and keep for an answer. Some of them may be invitations to dine—we are not very popular, our party, at Buckingham Palace or Marlborough House, in

Downing Street or the Embassies, but we dine a little notwithstanding—only, Mrs. O’Gee will probably forestall you in these matters, and will have ransacked all the dinner tickets and invitations before you proceed to your day’s work. And now about dividing your labour. Suppose you sit down to work at ten—I will generally join you in the forenoon some time, when I am not elsewhere. Three hours will generally finish your work. Let me see you in the evening again from four to six, when you will be entirely your own master. And now, good-night.”

CHAPTER II.

EILEEN TRAVELS WITH THE FLAG.

As the little steamboat threw off her ropes on the stream above the bridge at Galport, one bright forenoon towards the end of the year, Eileen Conran was sitting at the bow. There were heaps of barrels and boxes round and about her, so that she was not visible to anybody, though she looked keenly through the open lane of light on both sides of her, as the paddles beat the water and the steamer emerged into the first open bay outside Loughan. She gazed across the dark water at Father John's chapel; she could see the priest getting up on horseback at the churchyard gate. She sighed as the steamer beat its way beyond the islands, and the sedged shore, and the blue mist on the roofs of the huts. Eileen had never been farther away from the Claddagh than one of the islands in the Atlantic, and

she had gone thither with her father, and had had all the attention paid to her that his presence commanded.. This time she was to take a long journey all by herself; she was to be told, Gorton had informed her, wherever she went, where her next destination would be. She was setting out to show the flag of the rising to the men of the West. As she sat there at the bow of the steamboat, she felt the flag encircling her waist, as a sash, and it sent a glow of exultant enthusiasm to her heart and brain, so that she stood up and let the December breeze play with her hair, and a song of the old Celtic times flowed naturally to her lips. She sang to herself, looking out on the sunlit expanse of dark water, and in imagination she saw the shores of the Lough clad with armed men, called to their work by her. And she did not so much as shed a tear for her home in the Claddagh nor her absent father. Had not Gorton promised that there should be a light in the seaward window every night till she returned, and was not her place at the bridge to be taken by Conny Carmichael, her friend, though Conny's father was little of a friend to her father? Yes, it was all beauti-

fully arranged, and she was to be the proud instrument of spreading the great news of the deliverance that was preparing beyond the seas, and which but needed the signal to set all men free.

Time after time she unloosed her cloak, having first made sure that nobody was by, and looked down at the sash, to assure herself that it was actually there, tying her tightly up in the cause. Then, as the wide, blue mountains on the left hand loomed into view she resumed her seat, gratified and strong, and determined that her mission should be accomplished in every detail, so that her name would yet be mentioned in that Ireland beyond the seas, and the girl who carried the flag might be remembered even when she was dead.

“And these things like chimneys—what are they?”

“The remains of ventures, sir, ventures that have ruined three or four companies; lead mills some of them, distilleries some of them. Nothing ever prospers here. It’s all threatened away, sir, or shot away. Take my word for it, they’re a miserable, God-forsaken people who can come to no good, because they won’t

allow good to come and stay amongst them. Now we have a benevolent nobleman at Lough Head. He used to come among them. He built them outhouses to teach them model habits, English habits, sir, our habits, as I may say, if I am not mistaken in your nation. Yes, sir, English habits; but what do they do with their outhouses but put their milk-cans in 'em, and their cheese? Savages, sir, savages they are. Before I went engineer and purser of this boat, I seen most of the 'world, and you take my word for it, sir, savages they are. You go to Lough Head, sir, with a fine bright day, and no disturbance on the water; we'll touch the quay in something under three hours. I'll lift your ticket now, sir. I've got to look after my stokers."

Eileen heard that conversation behind her, and when it was done, Jeffery walked forward and leaned over the bow for a moment, looking into the spray. Then he turned, and Eileen, now standing, was looking at him.

"Out of the foam, or in a ray of sunlight from the mountains, or how?" asked Jeffery, throwing away a cigar and taking Eileen's hands in his own.

“Why, you are perishing, positively perishing with cold, and no wonder, sitting here all by yourself, and a breeze like this playing in your face. I don’t know how you are here, why, or where you have come from, whether it is a supernatural visitation, as it may be in this land of miracles, but as long as you are actually in the body you shall come aft—I am the only passenger—and sit in the shelter and share a very *recherché* little luncheon. Come, Eileèn, and tell me all about it, when we are at the other end.”

They walked to the saloon together, seeing no one on their way aft; there was no one to see them as they sat down on one of the cabin sofas. The luncheon was as good as the captain called it; and before they spoke much, they sat smiling into each other’s faces, while he handed her a flask and the best-made sandwiches in the West. She had no previous experience of that kind of delicacy and she ate them accordingly with much zest, though she had an afterthought of fear and trembling when she experienced the affectionate ardour of Jeffery’s eyes and remembered the sash at her waist and the mission it betokened.

“Eileen, I am so glad to see you, that I shall sit still and look at you for a little, and I sha’n’t say a word to you.”

Eileen was glad of the respite; she knew the next question would be, why was she there at all?

“Now, then,” she said, anticipating him, “I’ll hold my peace, too, when I’ve told you that I thought you would be hard at work, soldiering.”

“Why am I here? That’s it, is it? Little one, you don’t think I’ve followed you. No, but as you know I’ve found a sister—the widow Lynch—and I’ve taken some days to see how her estates stand at Lough Head—her estates, Eileen, your estates, yours, my bonny lass, as I shall prove. Great lawyers say so. And now, what about your venturesome voyage? Where do you go to?”

They were sitting clasped in each other’s arms now, and she looked tremblingly into his face.

“Nothing could induce me to tell you. No, no; you must let me have my own secret. We Catholics all have our secrets,” she added nervously, as he held her at arm’s length and looked dubiously into her face.

"It is only a secret of your religion then?"

But she found that now she loved him so much she could not tell him a falsehood. No, it was not a religious secret. Then she must be travelling for the Claddagh people? She only sighed as he said so. Her great indigo mantle was loose, and the sash at that moment showed itself.

"Why, you are wearing a flag!" said the soldier.

"Now you know, and if it's love there is in your heart for me, you will not ask more."

"Eileen, I spy danger, and I see a way out of it. What is to hinder it? We are free—we are together in the wilds. No one knows us. Let us marry, and the flag shall be our coverlet."

"I thought they laid it on the coffins only," said the girl, musing. And they went up together on deck, from which they saw that a great mountain range had broadened upon the Western aspect, that the sun was lighting up innumerable thickets of fir, that turf-boats, with their brown sails set, were scudding from island to island, and that Lough Head, overlooked

by the turrets of an old castle, was visibly within reach.

"Eileen, my darling, you must tell me more about that flag. You don't know what troubles you may get yourself into."

"No more, no more," said the girl. "I have work to do with it, and I will bid you good-bye now, for there will be a cart waiting for me at the pier-head; and it will not do for the people I go amongst to see us together. I am going away amongst the mountains for a little time on work you would not understand. Now that is the last kiss, the very last, and I am away to my place again."

He let her go as the steamer glided into an exquisite little bay, overhung by larches and edged with pliant willow trees, which, though stripped of their greenery, gave a cosy appearance to the place. The pier was wooden, and as the December sunlight fell upon the larches in the rear of it, only four men were visible, a constable, two men in connection with the steamer, and a man with a car. The car was for Jeffery, and he had his things promptly carried to it, keeping an eye upon Eileen all the time.

There was nobody waiting for her. She carried a simple willow basket in her hand, and with her cloak wrapped tightly about her, she disappeared into a highroad, having curtseyed to Jeffery as she passed out.

"Now, how far is Muckara from this?" asked the captain, feeling as desolate and uncomfortable as might be.

"Three miles, sir, no more. We'll go over the road in less than no time. I'm glad to see your honour. You're the first of the family that has ever visited Muckara. I've got one of the rooms in fine order for your honour. And if any ponies was to be sent round, there's not so many holes in the stable but what we could put them up."

"I'll have no horses sent up. I'll drive, Patrick."

"Hudy, your honour. Hudy's my name. And it's a fine gyurl that, your honour, I see you lookin' at, steppin' down the road there so brisk-like. It's a power o' sweethearts she'll have. I wouldn't mind, your honour, makin' a little love to her meself. It's very gay we are at Lough Head."

"Gay, you blockhead. You don't suppose

that's one of your ordinary colleens, do you?"

"No, your honour, she's not what you would call ordinar' anyhow. Not she. She's as beautiful as anything without wings can be."

"Well, you just drive on slowly. I'm going to speak to her. Here, take the reins."

Hudy was delighted. Here, he thought, was romance, and no mistake, and the young captain, who was to reside for the better part of a month at Muckara, the choicest of spirits. He was still more delighted when the beautiful colleen was induced by the captain to take a side of the car; and in consequence of his exuberance, he broke out into an incoherent set of descriptions of the high mountains to the West, of the delights of life at Muckara, of shooting, fishing, and what not, until suddenly he turned off the roadway into a slough, and drew up in front of a house, whose every window seemed blind, broken, or stuffed with brown paper and clouts.

"God bless me," said Jeffery, "do you call this having things in order?" as he led Eileen within the battered porch through a hall without a vestige of paint on its walls, and into

a kitchen which bore the exact resemblance to the interior of a mud-hut. "Show me the room you talked about."

Eileen stood at the kitchen fire until Hudy had shown the room, which was not so incomplete as Jeffery had expected it to be. There was, besides, a sitting-room in fair order, and as Hudy remarked slyly, "If I thought ye had your lady with you, I would have been more particular perhaps."

"Now, listen, Hudy, you're not so far off the mark as you might think. Are you capable of being taken into a man's confidence?"

"Faith, I can keep a secret with any man in Ireland."

"Well, you don't need to keep this one long. Are there any priests at Muckara?"

"There's old Father Mackessock, your honour; a fine man, and he'll hould as big a bowl o' punch as any."

"Well, the first thing you can do after you have put some dinner on the table—I suppose you are the domestic—is to call in the Father, and let him know that Mrs. Lynch's representative—stay, the priests in these outlying places are great sticklers, here's my card, and

ask him to come up to-night—you understand? I am getting married, Hudy, and here's a sovereign. Did you ever see a sovereign before? You hold your tongue about this, and put that in your waistcoat pocket. But if I find you've gossiped on the way down to the priest's or to the priest or to anybody else, it's the last you'll have in my service."

Eileen stood before the kitchen fireplace for a little; then she went out among the withered leaves, which were all the remains of the summer glory of the elms, which formed an unequal avenue to the battered front of the house. The mountains were to the West of her, large, menacing, and strange, tipped with golden light from the afternoon sun, some of the shimmer of which spread itself out on a great lough on the plain.

She remained looking at the scene, and the tears stood in her eyes, and the grasp of the flag was like the tightening of a serpent at her waist. What was this that had happened to her at the outset of her trusted expedition? She, who was to show to the hamlets the symbol of emancipation, had been stopped at the beginning of her mission. She was not,

she felt, altogether to blame. The arrangements made for her were that she should be met at the pier and be quietly conveyed ten miles into the mountains. No one had waited for her. How, then, could she go beyond Muckara that night? Would she not have to stay there or at the village till she knew better what to do? Then she heard part of her lover's talk with the man, and a great confusion passed over her. He meant that they should get married—married by a priest, and then she should be his, and a new life must begin for her. No, she would not, she could not marry him till her work was done; and she was walking up and down wringing her hands when Hudy, touching his hat to her, went down the broken avenue to the village.

“The donkey has provided nothing to eat, Eileen,” said Jeffery at the door, coming out upon the leaf-strewn remains of a lawn. “I’ve sent him to the village for chops, and what he can lay his hands on. But, hillo, I say, why, you are looking quite ill and agitated!”

Eileen only turned again to the mountains and wrung her hands.

“Why, you are crying!”

"No, no, it's nothing whatever; but I am bound to go away now. I cannot remain at Muckara. I should be on my road there," and she pointed towards the undulating mass of mountains, still lit with stray bars and lines of sunshine.

"Eileen, I've arranged it all. It's as simple as the A, B, C, which I am going to teach you. There's a Father Mackessock, who will come up here to-night, and we shall be married right off. Right off, I say, and nobody to forbid the banns; and a month to spend our honeymoon at Muckara, before we go back to Galport."

"And then?" asked Eileen, her eyes shining with excitement.

"Well then," and he put his arm inside her arm as they stood looking out together on the dying glories of the evening; "then, I suppose, I shall go back to duty, and you shall take some lessons from the nuns, and in good time join me at the Barracks as Mrs. Jeffery."

Eileen crossed herself involuntarily, and dried her tears.

"It's love you that I do, whether I will or not, and where my heart goes goes my hand

also. But this night I go to the village, and this night three weeks I will return to you, with part of my work done. Say nothing to hinder me. It is no use."

He said nothing, though as she left him in the twilight, he followed her retreating figure through the elms, with a sigh of regret and passion.

CHAPTER III.

BACK FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

CAPTAIN JEFFERY spent three restless weeks at Muckara. Eileen had gone out of his sight like a vision in a dream, and in the twilight beneath the stars, in the direction of the mountains. He had perfect faith in her. He knew that her love for him was as sincere as his own to her, but there were nameless difficulties in her way which did not lie in his, difficulties which she had not stated to him, but which he felt somehow were connected with that national Irish cause that lay at the heart of so many of the common people. He did not give himself much trouble about it, however; indeed, it rather increased his admiration for the girl that she should identify herself with a forlorn hope, and attempt to achieve great things for it in her own person. Yet he could not but be anxious for her, though, with three different

neighbours to pay visits to ; within the memory of man no landowner had ever come to see the seat of his income in that region. The only practical employment he put his hands to was that of white-washing the front of Muckara before his bride's return. Much to Hudy's astonishment, he white-washed it himself, and the former declared that it was as beautifully restored as the ould, ancient abbey of Lough Head, where the last of the Irish kings reposed in their stone tombs beneath the green ivy.

Inspired by his master's example Hudy did prodigies of hard work, so that in a fortnight's time all the front rooms were habitable, the dining-room emerged from a condition of dust and general debility to that of a high-roofed chamber, with a great open hearth, one wall overhung with tall antlers, another containing some smoked landscapes of considerable merit, while from the innermost recesses of a well-chipped sideboard the captain extracted some mugs and cups which looked as if they had been used in the pre-historic period at some coursing meetings, and which still retained the sheen of their silver. So that Father Mackessock, when he came up to dine with the captain

from Lough Head, had no difficulty in getting his sheltie stabled and fed, and he sat on one side of the hearth surveying the gay gentleman with a great deal of content. Father Mackessock was going to marry the captain and Eileen on Christmas Day; he had already received some handsome presents from the bridegroom; he expected more, and he liked the excitement of the thing, especially as he had no notion of who the bride was, having been told nothing of her except that she would be forthcoming at the end of the three weeks.

When a fortnight had elapsed and the shamrock and heath sprigs still came from a district post-office on the sea border, the captain began to tremble a little. He had a thought once or twice of setting out through the passes on horseback to follow on Eileen's track. Such a girl could not go from hamlet to hamlet without being known. Fool that he was to part with her at all, he told himself; yet she was safe enough apparently, for the next day and the next the postmark changed and showed that Eileen was returning upon her route towards Muckara. Then there was an end of them, and Christmas approached,

and he thought his arrangements were to come to nought. In spite of his fears, however, he rode to Ballinshee, twenty miles off, and ransacked a jeweller's shop and brought back the costliest marriage ring he could find, a gold harp, and an emerald bracelet. The jeweller could scarcely believe his eyes or his ears when he got the order; since he had opened his shop and began, twenty years ago, to take in and amend the substantial watches of the peasantry, he had made no such sales.

"It's Irish gold, sir, real, red, Irish gold and Irish workmanship, every bit of it, ring and brooch and bracelet. Happy, say I, may be the arm that wears the bracelet, the bosom that carries the brooch, and the finger that bears the ring. We would be the better of some more like you in the country-side, sir."

"That's a very pretty blessing, friend," said Jeffery, turning over a handful of notes to the watchmaker, "and I don't mind telling you, that the finger which is to wear the ring is the shapeliest, the bosom that is to carry the harp the tenderest, and the arm that is to wear the bracelet, the bonniest in or out of Ireland."

"Ah, you're the right sort of man to get

married, sir; happy may you both be all the lives of ye. Good-bye—good-bye.”

As the days followed each other, and Father Mackessock had no word of the bride, his curiosity became intense.

“I think it’s one of our fairies from the Lough he has in his eye. I hope the poor gentleman be quite in his right mind,” he said more than once to his housekeeper.

Nor would the priest have thought him in his right mind every evening at sundown, as he stood in front of Muckara straining his eyes along the white road which led down to Lough Head, and far away over the plains to the mountains. How he hated those mountains, their pitchy outlines red with the glow of the sinking sun each evening; red only for a little, then violet, and tipped with starlight, but black to the anxious imagination of the lover. Yet though it was Christmas time there was no winter snow, nor even much winter cold, which he felt to be a blessing so far. If she were caught in the snow and storm-staid in the mountains! He was not a happy man the evening before Christmas, for he thought Eileen was not going to come. He sent

Hudy down to Father Mackessock with a letter asking whether High Mass would be any interference if his bride came late on Christmas Day, and he sat in the refurnished dining-room waiting the answer, rather miserable, not knowing how to feel.

Then came a light tap at his window, as of a bird's beak. He thought it was a bird and hardly looked up. Another tap and another succeeded, and he rose from the fireplace and looked out. His bride at last! True to her promise she came, and was there at the window.

"Little one, little one, why did I ever let you go away?" he cried, gathering her to his breast, and straining her to him, as he kissed her. "If you think you can ever run away like this again——" and he led her into the firelight.

She was dressed as he had seen her at the Barracks the first day she impressed herself on him. There were no marks of travel; she was, however, a little pale and fatigued, and was glad to sit down in the chair he set for her. He sat down and fastened the harp at her throat, passed the emerald over her arm,

and showed her the ring which was to unite them in the morning.

"Oh, lover o' mine," whispered Eileen, holding up her arm, which was instantaneously conveyed to the lover's lips, as she showed the emerald shining upon her wrist. "And a harp of gold—it's what I have dreamt in my dreams."

"You know that Father Mackessock was beginning to think I had come up to wait for a fairy out of the Lough. He said so to me once, and has repeated it to a lot of people, I daresay. He was beginning not to believe in your existence."

"There's stouter stuff in me than in the fairies," said Eileen, with a finger upon the golden bars of her harp, and her braceleted wrist under her eyes.

"Yes, I should think there is. Look at these envelopes, look at all these postmarks, they show me where you have been in your journey——" and he read off the route from the back of the envelopes, Eileen starting with alarm and forgetting her jewellery. "Why, you have gone right through the heart of the mountain and come back from the sea."

"And does print tell you that?"

"Yes, and a good deal more than that. By-and-bye, Eileen, you must learn to read—it will amuse you too. But we shall speak of all that by-and-bye. How about the flag, Eileen?"

"I thought you would ask about the flag. What is a flag for if it is not to carry to the sea-shore, and the print has told you that I have just come from it?"

"Then why did you make such a mystery about it, little one? I convinced myself you were carrying it on some mysterious errand."

"Now I will go," said Eileen. "In the village I have taken a room——"

"And to-morrow you will meet me at the chapel door, and Father Mackessock will bless the ring, and I will fill your hands with gold and silver—he tells me I must do that——"

"With this ring I thee wed, this gold and silver I thee give, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow."

"You know it by heart, then," said the captain, rising as she rose, and going towards the window with her. And at the window, to his great astonishment, she burst into a storm of sobs which nothing could control.

“Oh, it’s wrong I am doing, wrong against my father—against my country—against the cause—to wed with an English gentleman and me, so poor, so ignorant, so presumptuous—oh, it’s weary I am and weak. Dear friend to me, you will walk with me as far as the village now. To-morrow I will meet you at the chapel door.”

“Eileen,” said her lover, as they went down among the elms towards the road, “when we are married we must have no secrets from each other. I will never ask you why you went to the sea-coast. But I see it has left trouble on your mind. Dry your eyes, and never let them be wet again for anxiety or fear. You have me and my sword arm to keep away danger.”

“And a proud girl I am to lean on it,” she said softly, the sobs all suppressed; “but it was only for the moment that I seemed to see into what is to come, and I thought of my father come back, and the miller—but I am talking weary nonsense to you. Good night.”

“Good night.”

Next day they met at the chapel and were married, and went up the hill quietly to Muckara.

CHAPTER IV.

FINN GETS AN INCOME.

AMONG his other duties at Keppel Street, Finn had to prepare each day a reading abstract of the Irish newspapers for the great patriot. That is, he marked such leaders, paragraphs, and reports of public meetings, as he thought Mr. O'Gee would care to read, and which he considered might be of importance to the national cause.

It was, while engaged on this work, his pleasant experience one morning to discover that he was himself famous over his native land. The London correspondence of one paper in Belfast announced that "Mr. O'Gee was drawing himself farther away from Constitutional Nationalism, as might be judged from the appointment of his private secretary, a youth recently expelled with every dishonour from a provincial Protestant college."

In more than one Dublin paper it was announced, "Captain O'Brien has been appointed secretary to Mr. Abraham O'Gee, in succession to the member for Dun Aengus."

"We understand," another said, "that Mr. O'Gee has selected as his private secretary a young gentleman connected with the land, but whose sympathies with reform are pronounced, as have already been shown to some purpose."

Other reports said, "Mr. F. O'Brien, of Lincoln's Inn, has been appointed private secretary to Mr. O'Gee." "Corporal O'Brien, late of the Guards, has been selected as his private secretary by Mr. O'Gee, and it may be regarded as a sign of the military situation which the patriot leader expects to arrive in Ireland." "The new secretary for Mr. O'Gee is a young priest from Maynooth, who has conscientious objections to taking holy orders."

All on the same day these announcements appeared, and Finn's head was in a buzz of excitement. North, east, and south his name was emblazoned over his entire native land. True, report made him a priest, a corporal, and a captain, a student of Lincoln's Inn, and a young gentleman connected with the land,

and he immediately meditated writing letters to each of the ill-informed journals to deny their false allegations, when Mr. O'Gee came into the room. Two little O'Gees were making hats of a couple of briefs beneath the table when their father rescued them, turned the children out, and having taken some soda water, huskily asked Finn if there was anything of importance to look at. No, there was not much that morning, but Finn showed him the paragraphs about himself.

"Fame, my boy, fame," said O'Gee; "drink deep now that the cup is raised to your lips. To few does it come so early, and I may say that is one of the advantages of political life. You may be the greatest ass in the three kingdoms, O'Brien, but if you have 'the flure of the house' your bray goes farther than the sweetest music, to the millions. I say, 'flure of the house' to you, because, of course, as my secretary your ambition will naturally take that turn. Three of my secretaries in succession went there; two of them turned traitors and are now enjoying the reward of their baseness by drawing incomes to the extent of £2,000 a year in permanent situations. Of

you I will anticipate rather better things. In connection with one of these paragraphs, however, where they say you are a member of an Inn, I think you might do worse. The truth is, that to belong to an Inn is rather better form than to be captain in one of these dark regiments of the West. It would give you no trouble to eat their dinners, and I will introduce you myself. Not that there is necessarily much advantage in being a barrister, when you are one. In London it is no exaggerated computation to say that every sixth man you meet is a barrister. You take your dinner at the Heel Tap, you tell me? Well, I make no doubt that all the waiters in the Heel Tap are barristers. London is strewn with them, yet if you are not a barrister you are apt to be taken for a vagabond. So it is better to connect yourself with a routine profession. I'll introduce you myself. Your mother will have to advance you a hundred or two for preliminary expenses, but that is nothing. And now I will dictate some letters to you. There are signs in the air that the Impenitent Thief, who steals all the policies of his opponents, will have to steal a Disestablishment

Act for the Episcopal Church of Ireland. Otherwise he must go, and in that case, Mr. O'Brien, we have the ball at our feet."

* * * * *

Finn soon began to find his way from Bloomsbury to other parts of London. He took a couple of rooms for himself in Coram Street, so high up at the slates that O'Gee, having panted half-way up to see him one day, paused and said, "No, Mr. O'Brien, no, thank you. I'll take your rooms for granted."

The secretary was very pleased that he should take them for granted. They were two little, unfurnished rooms at the roof, of whose elegance he had greatly bragged.

O'Brien had purchased a mattress and a tin bath, his landlady had given him a packing-box, and with these and a portmanteau he was content for the present to get along. His nominal income of four hundred pounds was very pleasant to think about; but he knew already that he should never touch a penny of it, and as yet no other way had been opened up for keeping him. The want of money had never oppressed him in Ireland. At Loop Head what did he want with coins of the

realm? Nothing, if it were not to throw them at guillemots and auks. He cared nothing in these days for money; not much more for it in Galport, though he had begun to see that it was worth something for its own sake, when he was collecting for his society and knew what potencies it could purchase. In London, however, the want of money was nothing more nor less than appalling, and all his preliminary guineas from O'Gee having been laid out in handsome clothing, which he wore fashionably, he soon had only a few sixpences to arrange his life upon. A few sixpences in Ireland would have carried him far, for he had the personal assurance and the gaiety of conversation which paid a bill with blarney, when there was no better coin forthcoming. He found that in London blarney was not current coin of the realm at all. It gave him some sore twinges inside his bosom to discover that the kind homeliness of the West had no counterpart in Bloomsbury. Then he set to devising means of increasing his income of nothing a year, in order that London might become habitable for him. And even without money he was not long in making himself familiar

with all that was to be seen and known between Westminster and the Tower, Cheapside and the Marble Arch. He had the instinct for correct dressing, and far from looking like the wild Irishman of his first night's arrival on the beach of Brighton, he only attracted attention because he was so stalwart and faultlessly clad. Nor were his excursions from Bloomsbury altogether without incident. Thus, for example, he found himself one sunny afternoon in the broad avenue of Regent's Park. It was a discovery, and he was amazed at the extent of open country around him, and had paused, the better to survey it from a stone fountain, to which he presently turned to drink.

He drank, when a person sumptuously and sensibly clad in furs, asked him to press the spring for her. She had expressive grey-blue eyes—the person—and smiled so affably that Finn hastened to obey her, and to suggest that it was icy cold and might advantageously be dashed with something warming. The person then entered into conversation with Finn, and walked along an avenue with him, from which he heard a furious roaring, and snarling, ~~screaching~~, and moaning.

"They are feeding the animals," said the person. "I find the Zoo quite attractive about sundown, when they are giving them beef. Don't you?"

"I don't know," said Finn, who had never been in the Zoological Gardens, and who, indeed, was at that moment looking intently at the person. However, he accompanied her into the Gardens, and walked among the lion-houses with her, and laughed at the monkeys, and saw a mischievous seal splash a little crowd, and an elephant cater for ginger-bread with his trunk, and an ostrich with his head in a trough.

The surprise of the Gardens was such a delight to Finn, that he ever and anon broke into the brogue of his childhood, and his companion surmised that he must have been born abroad. He bade her good-bye at the snake-house door, which he found he had no time to enter, and accepted with profound expressions of personal esteem the person's card and her assurance that she would be at home on such a day of the week at such an hour.

When the secretary remarked to the patriot subsequently that he was about to enter English

society under the auspices of a beautiful woman, and that it surprised him beyond measure that one so gifted should receive him at her home, O'Gee asked to see the invitation. It was only a card, with a female name, and an address at St. John's Wood. O'Gee laid it down and looked at his secretary.

"O'Brien," he said, "I hope you're not so deep as you look to me at this moment to be. You foolish boy, don't you know that's the beginning of ruin to many a pretty fellow. Society, you innocent out of the West! When you are asked into society on these terms and under these conditions, O'Brien, turn your back upon the invitation. Why, man, there's a great social question underlying that invitation, and I sometimes think that English statesmen, if they knew what they were about, would address themselves to it, without deviation to Ireland or elsewhere for many years to come. It's a great question, O'Brien; the great undiscussable question of the period. Take my advice, boy, and don't study it."

"I suspected nothing," said Finn; and O'Gee handed the invitation to St. John's Wood into the grate.

Another incident was not so easily disposed of. He was approached one night by a man in Russell Square who, touching him on the shoulder, gave him the password for No. XII. Finn at once responded and, walking beneath a gas lamp, saw his little friend the commercial traveller, who used to lift the funds of No. XII. for the great Mystery.

"Brother," said the little man, "I am advised to tell you that you have taken a step in going to O'Gee that No. XII. views with suspicion, to say the least of it. You will be required to make suitable explanations to General Gorton by letter and to the affiliated brotherhood which meets in the Westminster district. Take this address."

"Why should they be suspicious of Mr. O'Gee?" asked Finn; "he devotes most of his life unselfishly to the cause. His means of working are different from ours, but his object is the same—the complete separation and independence of Ireland and the possession of the island by her own people."

"He lives on it and off it," said the brother. "He is the seediest patriot Ireland possesses. He has not been inside a gaol⁺ all his life—

not once, and is never likely to be. Now we have no notion of a man who will not risk his neck for the cause. We are all ready and willing to hang for the cause. Ask Abraham O'Gee if he'll carry his love for Ireland that length."

"His ambition is not a halter," said Finn, as they crossed Oxford Street, and began to thread a succession of dingy thoroughfares leading into the Strand.

They reached the Strand without much further conversation, and passed through a narrow street on to the Embankment.

"We are safe here," said the little traveller; "we are not likely to be followed or watched, and, anyhow, now that you have become a public man, I am rather under protection with you."

Finn was flattered and pleased; it seemed a tribute to that warrior reputation which had been conferred on him by the London correspondents of so many newspapers in Ireland. He walked on tiptoe for a little distance, until the great tower above the Houses of Parliament came in sight, and pointing to it said,

"Well, brother, you must admit that, until

we get back our own, the Church and the Land, the Parliament and the Executive, a great deal of work has to be done under that tower."

Big Ben boomed above the Embankment, and sent his solemn legislative voice over the river and town.

"I have no patience with you," said the other. "When you hear that bell sound the same hour this night next week you will follow the direction on the card. Gorton is doing the thing well and nobly in the West. Have you heard of Michael Conran's daughter, and what she has done?—enough to make us all hide our heads for shame that we have ourselves done so little. She has carried the Sunburst through the mountains at the risk of her life, and the West's wide awake and waiting. The day will come when honour must be done to that girl. Now, O'Brien, everything must go down before this card. We are as alive here as in Galport, and that we have courage the Manchester Martyrs can prove. I was myself one of a deputation to the Home Secretary of England, a little time ago, when we mobbed his lobbies and staircases, and bluntly told him that

we would have life for life. Why, man, these English Ministers are as hard as steel—they are immovable and impenetrable. But we will discuss some agencies, when you come to the address on the card, that can both move and penetrate. Good-night, brother.”

“Good-night,” said Finn, turning back again on the Embankment, and feeling the full lights and rushing vehicles of the Strand a pleasant alternative to his thoughts. No. XII. was beginning to lose its attractions for him. Mr. O’Gee had on one occasion taken him with him to Woolwich, and on another to the dockyards at Chatham, and he had time to feel the force of his observation—

“O’Brien, look at these, my boy, and tell me what you think a conspiracy in the West can come to, or, indeed, a conspiracy of any man, woman or child of our beloved country. There is material to annihilate her.”

And the secretary had felt a misgiving which amounted to a positive sinking at the heart. The conspiracy and the hopes based on it became to him as a handful of ashes.

* * * * *

Finn’s want of income did not trouble him

much so long as he could pay his way. But presently his sixpences gave out; he did not like to approach Mr. O'Gee on the subject, for that gentleman frequently took occasion to suggest how happy a circumstance it was for him to have a gentleman of independent means working with him. But it was not very pleasant for him to pass a whole day upon a couple of rolls and drinks of unfiltered water, though once in a way he did not mind it. The second day it weakened and confused him, and the third day, though he pocketed a hunk of bread left on a side-board by a small O'Gee when he could not even buy the rolls, he felt that he must do something, though the last thing that suggested itself was to ask Mr. O'Gee for money.

He was strolling past the Heel Tap about dinner-time, when, without taking further thought, he went in as if he were the most affluent man on the premises. He had his own waiter now who knew him and had studied his little ways, so far as he had gone, and in the great upper chamber of the Heel Tap, with the window looking down upon the crowd waiting for the omnibuses in Tottenham Court

Road, Finn sat, while his friend with the towel handed him the *menu*. He thought he could not do better than start with ox-tail soup, while the waiter went away for turbot and half-a-pint of sherry, and as he was munching a ring-bone with an air of not caring much about his dinner, a brisk, pale man with a legal air about him sat down opposite. Finn took him for a barrister, then for a solicitor, and the first pangs of hunger being over, he thought how well it would be for himself if he could annihilate the man and get enough to settle his bill out of his breast pocket.

Being looked at, the man showed himself ready to be affable, and half-a-dozen sentences had not passed before he was aware that he had before him Captain O'Brien, the private secretary of Mr. O'Gee.

"You're in Parliament, sir, I believe," said the man, with unconcealed respect, as he looked at Finn airily quaffing his sherry.

"Not at present," said Finn, in a Bow Bells accent which outcockneyfied the cockney, who seemed to be a solicitor.

"Ah," said the man, "you've a great deal of power, sir, in your hands, you and Mr.

O'Gee. A people at the wag of your finger, as I might say. Now, sir, if I was to say what I thought would be the greatest act of patriotism to your country, it would be to recommend to the Irish nation Tootle's Liver Pills. It's all in the liver, Captain O'Brien. Go for the hepatic juices, and you will have a contented people, a people no longer conspiring against the Queen, sir, and the English. I am Tootle, I may say, and you see before you a man who, in advertising his pills, expends the sum of £5000 a year. But I can't fetch the Irish people with 'em. They won't have 'em."

Mr. Tootle looked keenly across the table at Finn, who, the more replenished he became the more uneasy he grew at the prospect of settling his bill.

"We're a healthy, wholesome people, sir, living a pure open-air life and it's not pills we require."

"Have you ever tried one of my pills, sir?" asked Tootle, as Finn, having consumed his roast-beef, was looking into an apple-tart with deep attention.

"Sir, I am happy to say, I never took a

pill in my life. I've drunk the waters at different places, and found benefit from them—but pills, no."

"Ah, the waters—Bath, Cheltenham, Harrogate, Buxton, Vichy, Homburg, Baden-Baden; you go there for the society no doubt. I undertake to say, however, that five-and-twenty Tootle's Pills are as salutary for the system as a grand tour of all the English and European pumps."

"You've never been to Kilkee, sir," said Finn, sipping the last of his sherry, and beginning to feel his way to a speech by which he should be allowed to pass out free till the next time.

"No, sir, I've not been to Kilkee, though my pills are certainly there, unappreciated it may be, but there I am convinced. And if not pills, bills. Now, captain," continued Mr. Tootle, "I've made it my rule in life never to miss an opportunity. I regard it, knowing as I do the efficacy of my pills, a grave duty owing to my fellow-creatures never to miss an opportunity. Don't rise, if you please." There may not be an opportunity on this occasion, but I hope you will see the thing

in the same light as I do. Captain, you are a secretary commanding the ear of a large public. Now, sir, if you can find a place in any of your letters for the phrase Tootle's Pills, in a sense not uncomplimentary to them, I shall consider it the most valuable advertisement I have received for some time. To express my sense of its value, I may say that I shall give you these five, sir, ten, fifteen, twenty-five pounds out of hand, and double the amount when the phrase has been used."

"Why, there is no harm in that," said Finn, gathering up the notes, as if he had bagfuls of them at home and it didn't matter anyhow. And that evening, in a reply to a question put to Mr. O'Gee by a Dublin agitator concerning the prospect of Land Reform for Ireland, Finn wrote that "the English government, be it Tory, be it Liberal, might be trusted to offer but a pill for the earthquake. For his own part, he believed that the regeneration of Ireland might as safely be expected through the use of Tootle's Liver Pills."

It was thus that he found himself possessed of the means of getting along in the capital.

CHAPTER V.

UNCLE ARTHUR.

CAPTAIN JEFFERY called upon Mrs. Lynch the day after his leave was out and he had returned to the Galport barracks. It was the second time he had visited at Tasmania; the first time he had seen Mrs. Lynch in it. She had been elsewhere when he accompanied his colonel on a former visit. But he was much struck, as he entered the house, with the new air of slatternliness introduced into it; the pictures on the walls of the hall were "skew;" there were only a third the number of antlers on the deers' heads; things had a general appearance of being upside down and outside in, which was not agreeable to the precision of his military habits. He met Mrs. Lynch at the drawing-room door, and went in with her beside the blazing fireplace. There was an extraordinary flavour of burning turf about the atmosphere, not so suggestive of a draw-

ing-room, as of a farm kitchen. He smelt degeneracy in the air; but as he held out his hand to the widow, and she received him with cordiality, he said nothing, though he had a feeling that it was quite his business to say something if he felt inclined.

"Well, Arthur, it's very good of you to come so soon after your return from the wilds. I have made up my mind about you. You are Arthur, of course, and I am trying to feel what a good thing it is to be presented with a brother in a way so unexpected."

"I hope you don't find it too awfully difficult, Totty?" he said, taking possession of a chair and stretching his limbs affably, as he looked at his sister. As he half reclined in his chair, and Mrs. Lynch sat bolt upright at the other side of the fireplace, it seemed impossible that they should ever have seen each other before and not at once recognised their kinship. Their faces were cast in exactly the same mould, they had the same azure tint of the eyes, the same clearness of complexion; and there was a feminine poise of the body which increased the similitude on his part almost to an identity of sex.

"I think," she said, "it is rather agreeable than not to have found a brother. I can't pretend, Arthur, to have gone on mourning for you or anything of that kind for any length of time. You quietly died out of my memory, as my mind got filled with other things. I wonder what our fates have arranged for us by bringing us together again. I have been wondering ever since you went for me to Muckara. It was an act of devotion, my dear brother, that establishes our relationship very well. I somehow feel that you are to help me out of so many troubles, though," she added quickly, "of course I hate interference. I couldn't have that, even from you, Arthur."

He was glad she said it, as he rose and walked from end to end of the drawing-room. It irritated him a little, and her earlier words had only made him gulp down a dreadful sensation in his throat, as he thought of Eileen, his wife, and the duty he owed to her now.

Mrs. Lynch's eye followed her brother curiously. He attracted and repelled her; she felt there was some dominating impulse in him which, if it conflicted with her own,

would strike out angry sparks and might end in storm.

“I should like so much to hear of my tenants at Muckara,” she said softly. “Tell me everything about Muckara, and how you really got on.”

“You would be dreadfully bored,” said the captain, sitting down again, “if I told you everything that happened. But, to make a long story short, Totty, I must say that I think the poor devils who work the land thereabouts have reasonable ground for complaint. The only representative of the family they have, in their generation, seen, is the man sent down by your banker to collect the rents—a fellow they naturally all long to shoot, and to do them justice, have tried their best so to dispose of. They are precisely the same lot of people as you have at Innes, as I have seen at St. Columbkil or anywhere else within fifty or sixty miles of Galport. As for Muckara, it’s a very good shooting-lodge as I left it; though the back part is all tatters and damp. I white-washed the front myself and—ahem—had some of the front rooms made habitable. I should think there’s hardly a resident proprietor for

miles and miles about; the people have no notion of anybody but abstractions like Estates Courts, or a Guild in London, or something as disreputable and remote; and you should see the little emperor who drives his trap among them—the resident agent, I mean, of Lord Thingumbob, and they always miss him, when they shoot at him, he's such a paltry little thing. But while all that's the case, the scenery is simply the finest I've ever set eyes on, and I've seen all kinds, as you know. Heavens! those mountains would make the fortune of any other country in Europe."

"How do you mean, Arthur?"

"Well, I mean that there are sunsets at the back of them, and sunrises in the front of them, panoramic stretches of water at the feet of them, scenery of the earth, of the water, of the sky, which ought to be carried back in fragments to all the art-galleries, and to which regiments of tourists should annually march."

"You make me quite happy, Arthur. I am so anxious to think of the West coming to something on its own merits, and without foolish little attempts at rebellion that you quite renew my own hopes."

“What hopes?”

“Oh, you don’t quite understand. I am an enthusiastic Irishwoman. I am all on the side of the people and that sort of thing, and think that if they are taken upon their inherited instincts and their Celtic tastes, they will become a great and attractive nation. Had you some good shooting?”

“I got a snipe or two and some plovers—that was all. I hadn’t much time for shooting; like you I have become thoroughly Irish. At Lough Head there is an old abbey. I shall show you one of the windows, a Norman window, I sketched. Think of that exquisite structure being up there about five hundred years ago, and Irish kings in it. I suppose they had the status of King Koffee and Chick-aboo of the Great Lake; but I confess there was something about that abbey that made me walk in it, over and over again, at sunrise and sunset, and it was as good as poetry to reconstruct the buried kings, put them in their robes again, and see them heading charges—the O’s against the Fitzs, and the Macs against the Cons.”

Mrs. Lynch rose abruptly to her feet, went

out without a word of 'explanation' and came back with a letter in her hand.

"Arthur, you must let me read you a sentence or two from a young Irish politician's letter, with whom I correspond a little. You talk about realising the past. Hear what he says."

"Who is he?" asked the brother abruptly.

"Mr. O'Brien," said his sister softly, if also a little defiantly, "Mr. O'Brien, private secretary to Mr. O'Gee, the great orator and patriot. This is what he says:—

"'Although we are now working might and main to make it impossible for an alien Church to collect its tithes from a populace who hate it, we feel that much must be accomplished for our country by the renovation and alteration of social life.'"

"Don't, Totty, for heaven's sake. If there's one thing more than another that I abominate it's to hear a Pat tied to a couple of stilts mouthing his periods. Pat enjoys himself so much when he gets on to them, and strides about and hears himself unwinding them that it is a positive aggravation. I wouldn't encourage it, if I were you."

Mrs. Lynch looked a little coldly at her brother, and in a rather tremulous voice resumed—‘by the renovation and alteration of our social life. We must return upon the past of Ireland to do so. If the ladies of Ireland would don the garb of ancient Hibernia and show themselves in society in it, and prove that they were not ashamed of it, a great step would have been taken. It is Mr. O’Gee’s opinion, and I may add, my own, that the ladies of Ireland are apt to be a little ashamed of their country. If they would lead in this matter, when we have liberated Ireland we would be in the position of America, for as a nation we would consume our own——’

“Smoke?” asked the captain impatiently.

“No, ‘habiliments, and we would exact a tariff which would shut out all the manufactures of England. And, like America, we would prosper exceedingly, for if we have not the same internal resources as America to get along with, we have not the same individual ambition to grow great with riches.’ Some of that I don’t understand.”

“I should think not,” said the captain; “do you suppose that he understands it any more

than you? I have no patience with these fellows. I do hope, Totty, you will take my advice, and not let yourself get mixed up with them. It's all buncombe. Nobody likes the Irish better than I do, but these fellows——” The captain rose and ungraciously spat into the grate.

“In spite of your aversion, however, I mean when I go to London to wear my Irish colours in the face of the world.”

“Be a guy, Totty, if you like. There's no law to hinder it. And who the deuce is this fellow, with his magnificent views? A lad who got the door shut in his face the other day at the Galport College—a nobody, a nothing-at-all, your son's tutor. Upon my word, Totty, if I am to do anything for you, I must have a little respect for you. Drop this ridiculous ass and his future of Ireland and his pompous Parliament airs. It's hanged aggravating—I've nothing better to say to it than that.”

This was kinship with a vengeance. Mrs. Lynch was silent for a little time as she folded up her precious letter and put it out of sight.

“I hope to goodness, Totty,” he resumed,

“the fellow hasn’t been making love to you. Hang him, if he has, I’ll consider it my duty to get a short leave of absence to go over and kick him. Promise me, my dear sister, to break off this correspondence. Confound it! You have the choice of half-a-dozen fellows, any one of them mad about you—Thorburn, Mountinnes, De Burgh, and the Lord all knows who besides; they are at least gentlemen, every one of them.”

But when the captain’s blue eye searched his sister’s face, he read in his sister’s blue eye the invincibility of a nature rather more strong than his own. It was not exactly contempt he saw in her features, but it was an expression passing from surprise to something closely allied to contempt.

“Brother,” she said in a tone with a hard ring in it, “brother, you forget. I have come so far on in the journey of life by myself. I am a little bewildered perhaps. But I thought I could not be wrong in taking you a little into my confidence. You cannot assist me with your advice. Please, on another occasion, to remember that.”

She rose, and the captain was about to go,

when Morris looked in, and seeing him, advanced.

"I say, are you the fellow that's my uncle? I'm the squire. This house belongs to me; everything's mine. 'Taint mother's. It's mine. My father left it all to me. Wait till I'm a man. That won't be long. I'll have jinks as high as Slieve Innes."

"Well, squire," said the captain, "come and shake hands; you aren't a man yet at any rate. You have the sweetest brogue, to be an English boy, I ever heard."

Mrs. Lynch sat down again.

"Morris dear, shake hands with Uncle Arthur."

"Arthur! That's not much of a name," said the squire, disobeying his mother, and fishing a cartridge out of his trousers' pocket. "I ain't going to obey *you*," he continued, as he looked at Jeffery, and rightly supposed that he discovered a look of rebuke on his face.

"Wait till you're asked, young one. I say, what are you going to do with that cartridge?"

"That," said Morris, throwing it into the fire, where it forthwith exploded and ejected a large blazing turf upon the carpet. The cap-

tain seized the turf and threw it back again, and snatching a brush, gathered up all the scattered sparks in a heap inside the fender.

"Where is he?" he asked, his fingers tingling with pain, as he looked round for the boy.

"He's gone," said Mrs Lynch. "I am so sorry, Arthur. Usually he is a very well behaved boy. I can't think how he should have been so rude and foolish."

"He ought to be thrashed for it," said Jeffery decisively.

"It is degrading treatment for any boy. I am certain he is very sorry and ashamed of himself."

"Well, Totty, he had need to be."

A second time temper had come between brother and sister. The latter felt this time that the fault was not his.

"Arthur," she said, changing the subject, after she had inquired about his burn, "did you know that I painted? Shall I bring you something I have done?"

"By all means," said the captain, appeased, and sorry there should have been any misunderstanding.

“Come up-stairs with me then.”

They went up-stairs together, into the boudoir, which she had transformed into a sanctum. It was the most prayerful little room the captain had ever been in; he naturally lowered his voice, as he stood in it and looked at the tall crucifix on the altar-piece, the Virgin and Child over the mantelpiece, and the paintings of saints on the three walls, and the one red pane in the centre of the window with an embodiment of cherubs by Raphael.

“I suppose Lynch went in a good deal for this kind of thing,” he remarked, when his sister came back with a picture.

“No, indeed; he hated the symbolism of the Church. He was a Protestant all his life, and not much of that. I am beginning, I think, to find great consolation in my religion. It helps me to bear up, and not to be ungenerous. Now look at this, Arthur, and tell me if you think I am an artist. If I have caught the attitude and expression, you should see the prettiest peasant-girl in Ireland.”

“So!” said Jeffery, without a motion in the muscles of his face, though his sister saw a faint pallor gather above his eyebrows and at

his lips. It was Eileen, sitting as Mrs Lynch had taken her the day she discovered her at the side of the brook.

“‘So!’ Is that all, Arthur? Not a word of praise? No criticism? At least, isn’t she pretty?”

“She’s pretty, God knows, and it’s her living image.”

“Then, of course, you know her—perhaps, indeed, you know her well.”

“Oh, well enough. She comes, or rather used to come, to our Commissariat Department. I’ve seen her often. Yes, I know her well. Totty, will you give me this? I shall have a—I shall like to have it. The fellows at the Barracks have their rooms well covered with pictures—so much so, indeed, that they can’t take a lady into them and ask her to look freely about. Now this sweet peasant girl, this beautiful brown fairy from the water-side, with her musing unconsciousness, it will shame them, if I put it on my wall. How did you get it? Is she a friend of yours?”

“I was advised to have her as a maid, but she wouldn’t serve.”

“No, she wouldn’t be likely to serve. I

suppose, by the way, you know the story about her claim to Tasmania, to St. Columbkil, and to Muckara. She might be taken up as a sister, Totty, not as a maid."

"I am afraid you are a little in love with her."

And they went down-stairs again, this time into a tea room, where a footman with a broken nose brought in some china without handles or spouts. Morris came in, and to make amends for his previous bad behaviour looked as obedient as he could. He brought in his father's sword and had the great pleasure of seeing his uncle make romantic passes with it and perform so many flashing feats with it that his mother lost colour now and then. Then, of a sudden, a great wailing arose from the region of the kitchen, and the sword was put into the scabbard.

"What are those noisy beggars about?"

"They're keening. It's jolly to hear them keen," said Morris. "One old woman sits in the middle and screws her mouth up, and then all the rest do it. But I say, mother, that's too much of a good thing, ain't it?"

"Some one is going to emigrate," explained

Mrs. Lynch, as the house presently seemed enveloped in a desolating cry.

"They should be told not to do it," said the captain, who became quite uneasy with the prolongation of the sound.

"Let's go and look at them from the staircase window, They can't see us there."

And Morris led the way up to a point from which they saw down into the back-court. It was true enough about the old woman. She seemed to be a professional adept at producing the desolating cry, and while she did it, about fifty others were munching at the remains of the widow's larder.

"God bless me, Totty, do you mean to say they come down on you like that? About a hundred of them at a time?"

"They are my tenants," explained his sister.

"Well, I've heard of tenants coming in once in a time to have a feed, but these ruffians seem to the manner born. Do they come often?"

"Always," said Morris; "every day."

"Now, only look at that fellow helping himself to a fine Yule log. And look at your cook

paying out barley into the pockets of half a dozen crones. Totty, I won't stand it! You will be in the *Gazette* in no time if this goes on. As a military economist I protest. Stay where you are, and I shall show you what I think they deserve."

In another moment the sound of the keening changed to a multitudinous cackle of alarm, as the captain, brandishing a naked sword, with his hair wildly flung off his ears and brows, threw himself into the crowd.

The man with the Yule log dropped it and stood at bay in a gateway, while the alarmed retainers fled by every open passage into the park. The sword glistened and whistled and shone over the heads of the shrieking and retreating crowd until only two male retainers, 'thinking they spied fun in it, remained.

"Avaunt! Begone, I say, and come no more hither," shouted the captain, feeling for his pipe-case, as he saw the Yule log picked up again, "or bullets three I put into thee." At the same time he snapped his pipe-case, and the click of the spring so alarmed the remainder that they fled in dismay.

“A total defeat, by Jove!” he murmured, as he entered the house again.

“Don’t let this Irish fad run away with you altogether,” he advised his sister, as he parted with her at the other side of the house.

CHAPTER VI.

AT THE RESIDENT MAGISTRATE'S.

THE R.M.'s *Ménage* in Galport was more massive than comfortable. His bachelor's establishment presented a massive wall to the river, a strong three-century-old wall, with no sign of the weakness of old age about it, and the window of his dining-room looked into the stream. He only occupied half the house, and it was more than he required, the rooms were so lofty. He was attended by a man who came in through the archway which led from the street by a lane to the house, who came early in the morning, and went away late at night, having cooked the R.M.'s meals, served them, waited on the R.M., and done everything that was to be done about his rooms and person. The dining-room window of the R.M. commanded a full view of the mill of Joyce Gorton, and it was with

growing interest that the magistrate noted the signs of an increasing industry. The dead-alive ivy had been nearly all removed from the walls of the mill, two great wheels were circling all day at the lode; a white cloud of flour dust revolved at the windows, and there was a continuous, cheery shouting from morning to night of men handling sacks and working a crane let into the mill wall. The magistrate had a sincere desire that the river should be busy, and Irish hands well employed. Satan, he believed with Dr. Watts, found very little employment for people earning honest wages, and he convinced himself that the work of his court had grown lighter since the American took up his residence and set to with his lade and wheels. He liked the appearance of the man, too; a stalwart, lean, industrious Yankee, ready with a joke at any time, and who seemed to have the power of enforcing obedience among his men by a glance. At first he had suspected him and had him watched as a Nationalist; but a little experience had enabled him to conclude that the Yankee talked Nationalism simply because he did not understand it, and because he

thought it would do his business good among the people who brought him their corn. Then, having seen his behaviour in the County Court, where he argued a case in his own favour and won it, he made up his mind that the industrious, worthy American ought to be invited to join the County Club. In the whist-room he would be invaluable—especially if he was not too skilled a player; the neighbourhood was not so rich in men who might be associated with as to neglect Mr. Gorton.

It was while he smoked at his window and watched the hauling of an American brigantine up to an opposite wharf, where nothing heavier than a potato smack had lain within his experience for years, that he concluded it was high time to associate with this benefactor of the neighbourhood. Let him join the club once, and he would no doubt drop that affectation of Nationalism which had at first alarmed the authorities; he would see that it was bad form, and that it was much more becoming for a man in his position to discourse of law and order than of tenants' grievances, landlords' tyrannies, agents' frauds, and what not.

While the brigantine was being slowly warped to her position, Gorton's voice was sounding over the river. The man must have been everything in his time, thought the R.M. He gave his orders as if he were quite at home in seamanship, as if he had been a pilot or a skipper among other things. So versatile a man would assuredly be invaluable at the club, and there could be no objection to introducing him, since, as an American, it mattered nothing whether or not he had passed through these menial experiences. They would have debarred another man. But it was a portion of the eccentricity of the great nation that a man might combine in himself all the trades and all the professions and still be a gentleman fit to associate with gentlemen.

So thought the R.M., as he lifted his window and in a genial voice spoke down into the river, where Gorton's boat was paying out rope on its way to a ring in the wall of the magistrate's house.

"I say, Gorton," he said, "if you can come up and take a cigar after you have tied up that ship, I shall be glad to see you."

Gorton did not know where the voice came

from at first ; the magistrate was standing two storeys over his head.

“ Did you hear anybody ask me in to a smoke ? ” he remarked to a man at the bow of his boat.

“ Yes, your honour. Mr. Butler, your honour, up there in his own mansion at the window. ”

“ Je-rusalem !—magistrate—take a cigar ? I shall be proud and pleased to do it when I’ve got my friend’s brigantine fixed. ”

“ Thank you ; you know the way round from the High Street, through the archway and the lane, to the door with the big bronze knocker. ”

“ I shall find it, ” said Gorton.

“ I hope this is the beginning of a fleet, ” said the magistrate, still talking into the river. “ I’ve seen nothing more useful in my time than the arrival of that very considerable ship you are fixing. ”

“ She’s pretty well, magistrate. Came over here in eighteen days. As good as steam, I take it. But we can do better than that. There’s depth of water here for a thousand tons, and she’s only three hundred. You believe me, magistrate, I hope to live to see

a thousand-ton fleet anchor in our bay and come up to these wharves."

"Amen, I say. You will be round in an hour or two, I suppose."

And his window shut with a bang.

"Amen," said Gorton, with so sinister an intonation that his boatmen looked at each other, and felt half inclined to think they had the devil on board.

* * * * *

He went round from his hotel in the square, after dinner, and found out the bronze knocker, and was shown up-stairs to Mr. Butler's large dining-room, with the open hearth, on which a turf fire was cheerily burning. On a side table some case-bottles were standing, labelled in silver, and Captain Jeffery was helping himself to something, while Commander Thorburn, with coat-tails between his hands, warmed his baser parts from the hearth.

It occurred to Gorton that here was a representative of all the services, a magistrate, the commander of a gun-boat, and a captain from the Barracks. Was it a trap of any kind? What was he asked for? Did they suspect the mill to be a blind for more serious opera-

tions affecting the destiny of the entire West?

“Captain Thorburn, Captain Jeffery,” said the magistrate, introducing the American, who stood, lank and scrutinizing, half a foot above them on the dining-room floor.

“Gentlemen, I am proud and pleased to make your acquaintance,” he said, holding out his hand to each in turn, and measuring them from top to toe: “I believe I’ve seen you on different occasions at the bar of my hotel, where I can vouch for it that they give out excellent material.”

“Not so good as Butler’s, if you take my word for it,” said Jeffery, finding sugar and hot water for himself.

“Then, with Mr. Butler’s permission, I venture to compare ’em. This is indeed a very fine spirit, and the country which produces it may well be proud and happy. Now, I don’t know why they should have any unhappiness in Ireland at all, with the capacity to produce and the disposition to drink a free, mellow, heart-warming spirit of this description. Mr. Magistrate, this is the first time I have had the honour and the pleasure, sir, of receiving your hospi-

talities. I believe you will not misunderstand my language when I say that I drink to our close acquaintanceship, that I hope and trust it will not be the last time."

"I hope not, indeed," said the R. M. with cordiality. "I have had some opportunity of watching your career in the West."

Gorton turned his scrutiny full upon the magistrate's face, but detected no alarming symptoms, though he put his hand in his pocket for his handkerchief and genially felt at the region of his six-shooter. Joyce Horsa Gorton was no man to be taken unawares. If a trap it were, he was ready to sell his life at the most expensive price the guests could pay for it. He mentally measured his distance from the window and the height of the window from the water before the magistrate proceeded to add, "And I have come to the conclusion that you wield some supernatural agency. I don't mind telling you, Mr. Gorton, that I took you for an infernal Fenian for a time."

Gorton smiled and put his handkerchief back in his pocket on the top of his pistol.

"However, I accept your Fenianism. I wish, my dear fellow, we had some more of it,

Here have I been at this window ; looking out on this river, for not much under quarter a century, and until the other day, it has been the same dead and alive salmon river, with a few potato smacks at the quays. Well, you come on the scene, a ruin becomes a mill, the wheels begin to turn, the boys begin to carry sacks, and here, proud am I to say it, this very night is a hawser tied to a ring in my own wall, to a vessel come all the way from America. If that's not witchcraft, Thorburn, tell me what is. Gorton, I pound sugar in my tumbler to you."

"I saw that brigantine run in, by Gad," said Thorburn, "and I may say to you she shaved the gunboat with her top-hamper as she made for the bar. It was one of the prettiest things in seamanship, but it was devilish near being a disaster."

Gorton was charmed.

"Yes," he said, "I think she went over the bar galloping. Eighteen days, sir, from Nantucket. Took the pond as straight as an arrow. In three days she will fill up with my flour, sir, and bring me back from Amsterdam some of the finest machinery cast in Belgium.

I guess that's business, and if there is no offence in my saying it to you, I think it's a higher class of seamanship than dodging around, for the most part at anchor, in a gun-boat of the British Government."

"That's an o—pinion," drawled the commander, in an imitative voice, and the magistrate, foreseeing disagreeables, rang for his man to bring out the card-table.

Gorton played neither well nor ill; he preferred poker to whist, he said; but nobody knew poker, so he played whist. At the end of a couple of hours he had handed over three Irish notes to the commander, apparently with the greatest good-will in the world. And as he rose to go, the R. M. asked him if he would allow him to put him up for election at the club.

"Sir, I don't mind telling you it's an honour I greatly covet. I am not an idle man, magistrate. I have a good deal on my mind, but Galport is rather tarnation slow. We have no public amusements, sir. When I walk into the country, gentlemen, I never see the peasants dancing, as I was told in early youth they did. There is nothing to amuse them

but the Roman religion, and if I am a Puritan myself, magistrate, I can still do the justice to Romanism to say, that it does lighten the life of these poor people now about us."

"No Fenianism, Gorton, or you'll be pilled at the club."

"Well, I guess you know what I mean, and I shall be very proud and pleased to have the entry to your club-house. 'Pears to me that there's more laughter in that little corner of Galport than anywhere else. Gentlemen, if you will open the door for my entrance, I will make it my duty not to abuse too much your hospitality."

* * * * *

Gorton went straight from the magistrate's to the mill. No. XII., diminished as to its members, was to hold a meeting. Nothing of great consequence passed, except that Eileen attended and stated where she had been, and what had become of the flag. It was left with a brotherhood on the sea-coast, who were to use it for signalling; altogether, however, it had been presented to thirty societies, and each in their turn had sworn fealty and secrecy, with all the honours.

The meeting was held in the ordinary mill-room, where Gorton made up his accounts, but Eileen told her story at the door above the wooden stair-case, in a tremulous voice, and when Gorton praised her, and said that the honour of a similar mission had been prepared for her, she seemed on the verge of breaking down.

"No, no, general, not now, not yet. There are Irish sisters and wives that will be proud to carry the flag to the Shannon. It's only fair to give them the chance. I'm not for taking everything on myself. And what if my father should come back in my absence, and find me without a wick in the window?"

"He will not come back yet awhile," said Gorton; "his service in the cause keeps him out of Ireland for some time to come."

"God be thanked!" said Eileen fervently, crossing her arms.

"And you will take the flag to the Shannon?"

"No, general, no. I will do all I may do for the cause, but not that, not so soon. I'm but a weak, timid woman, and it's a far journey to the Shannon, and there are others——"

“ But I thought, when you thanked God for your father’s absence, you meant that you were glad to go. Eileen, you must choose for yourself, if this honour is to go past you. The great Mystery in Dublin has forwarded this,” and Gorton took out from his desk a small cross of gold, “and you may freely wear it, Eileen, and congratulate yourself on a first mission well achieved. My girl, now that you are willing to give your life to the cause, I may have to send you across the Atlantic in its interest. My ships are beginning already to come in. ‘The enemies of Ireland little know how near she is to emancipation. But we must all be ready at a moment’s notice.’”

Eileen, however, looked so wan and fatigued, and black about the eyes, that, for the present, he shelved his proposal, and let her go back to the Claddagh without pledging herself to a new mission.

The married woman had responsibilities that the virgin did not know.

CHAPTER VII.

FINN IN POLITICAL SOCIETY.

“O'BRIEN,” said the patriot O'Gee, one afternoon, “your letters to the country are very fair. You have the imitative faculty to a very great degree. There are periods in some of these letters that I almost envy. That reply to the Cork grocer who wished to know when we meant seriously to begin will become classical. You have a turn, boy, for phrases, and phrases, after all, rule the world—rule the Irish world at least, and that's our world. But some of your replies which have been published are unintelligible. Born at Loop Head, Shannon, how comes it about that you allude so much to pills, fishing-tackle, top-boots, soda water, Birmingham watches, and I know not all what? Is that the part of English civilisation which strikes you most? I don't find a single published letter which

does not contain a prominent allusion to an English industry. And look at this: 'The regeneration of Ireland may be expected through the free use of Tootle's Liver Pills.—Captain O'Brien, Secretary to Abraham O'Gee. M.P.' You haven't noticed that? Well, I've seen it in twenty English papers, and it'll be in the Irish ones shortly, and then over all the world. Who is Tootle? And what have we got to do with his pills? And how did he come to get hold of a testimonial from you?"

Finn said he was under the impression that he might augment his income any way he liked by bestowing paragraphic information upon individuals who might ask it.

"Information," said O'Gee, "that's not information at all. That's a private and preposterous opinion of your own. But, come O'Brien, there's something under this. Let me see your correspondence with Tootle."

"We have no correspondence. I meet Tootle at the Heel Tap and he arranges with me there. I have just seen him to-day, and these are his, or rather mine now—payment for the advertising allusions I have made in my letters

to various friends of his in different trades throughout England."

O'Gee lifted a large bundle of bank notes. "Well," he said, slowly counting them over, "I have some friends in the House of Legislature who understand the financial value of an advertising allusion, but I very much doubt if their labours are always rewarded so munificently as yours seem to be. Your abilities, O'Brien, are unmistakable, and your knowledge of the workings of the dark regiments may be invaluable at the next General Election, but really, you know, two hundred and fifty pounds in Bank of England notes, at a time when my briefs are not always lucratively backed—two hundred and fifty pounds, O'Brien!" And O'Gee divided down the bundle, handing a third over to O'Brien and tossing the remainder recklessly into a drawer.

"I may always look for a third then," said Finn.

"You may, Mr. Secretary; but I hope you will exercise your powers judiciously, and in such a way that sarcasm may be baffled. And now about this meeting of Secretaries in Piccadilly, be on your guard; no hint or

indication of our movements except a wrong hint, and a false indication; and beware of play as you respect your gains, and of the bottle, as you hope to keep your secrets and master your neighbours'. By the way, have you heard from Mrs. Lynch lately? Here is an abstract handed me, to-day, of a possible case for the courts, in which it is to be contended in behalf of Eileen Conran, of the Claddagh, that Tasmania, Muckara, and St. Columbkille rightfully devolve upon her. Quite a little romance, the whole thing is, the weight of documentary evidence, so far as birth, relationship, etc., are concerned, having been fished up from the bottom of Galport Bay. Well, you do take it to heart, O'Brien. I daresay it's no joke for you if the estates pass into the hands of the new competitor."

"Oh, as for that I care nothing. But I should doubt the truth of the evidence having been discovered."

"You may save yourself the trouble, O'Brien, for in a canvas bag the whole thing, neatly waxed and sealed, as if for the American mail, was fished up by old Professor Thomson's dredges. Now, you may go." Finn went,

and felt so wretched that he lay down on a sofa—he had changed his room to a more fashionable quarter of Bloomsbury—“flured,” as he expressed it to himself. Finn, in removing the documents and in waxing them into the post-bag of the Barracks, had no sort of feeling that he was doing anything reprehensible. They were, as he had argued with himself, papers which could never be of much use to Eileen Conran, while they might be of great disservice to Beatrice Lynch. In putting them out of sight he believed himself to have even done something for the good of the Catholic Church, for here was Beatrice Lynch a convinced Catholic, and what service the estates might prove to the Church would be extracted from them under her tenure to greater advantage than under Eileen’s.

The re-appearance of the papers, by means of a dredger shocked his imagination. It was as if some invisible hand were fighting the battle of life with him. The documents of the Lynch family had been restored, and now they were surrounded with the protection of their mysterious salvation. For, under no circumstances could he conceive of their being again

tampered with; no, not even if they were brought within his reach in the ordinary course of O'Gee's law business. They were henceforward uncanny things, and not to be lightly touched; what the sea gave up in that mysterious fashion would be respected.

But Mrs. Lynch? Was there a prospect of her coming down from her high throne in the West, that Eileen might ascend it?

Heaven forbid! Finn rushed to his writing-desk and poured out his feelings thus:—

“MY DEAREST FRIEND.—An awful and hideous danger surrounds you. I would that I could tear the odious documents into a million shreds and scatter them to the four winds of heaven. I have not yet—so overpowered am I with unutterable thoughts—ascertained the full measure of your danger, but it consists of the lamentable fact that your estates will become the subject of a lawsuit, and that a poor fisher-wench may take possession of Tasmania, St. Columbkill, and Muckara. Find out, my dear friend, who is at the back of this. The traitor-knaves may yet be unmasked in time, and the Church may remove from the toils of the Judas Iscariots in the back-ground the documents on which the claims are made. Ever believe me to be the staunch well-wisher of you and yours,

“FINN O'BRIEN.

“*Secretary to Abraham O'Gee, M.P.*”

The letter relieved him a good deal; he was, indeed, always a little relieved when the wind of language blew off some superlatives, and substituted for loathed individuals little known, other individuals regarded with a universal and historical loathing. "Unmask," "odious," "Judas Iscariot"—the use of these and suchlike were to his temperament much what a dose of sal volatile is to a fainting woman. Having written the letter, he dressed and went out to Piccadilly, in the gaslight, where he had engaged to meet no fewer than four statesmen of mark, all secretaries to men in Parliament as widely known as the great O'Gee himself.

The rooms in Piccadilly, he was surprised to see, were rather smaller than his own in Bloomsbury, though there was an artistic elegance of the arrangement of the drawing-room which he had never seen excelled. He sat in the little drawing-room with Mr. Secretary Acton, waiting for the arrival of Mr. Secretary Sillars, Mr. Secretary Wood, and Mr. Secretary Wallace. These statesmen were a little new to their work. None of them had as yet assisted their masters in a Cabinet;

they were each of them in opposition, but that only gave them a larger air of sagacity and responsibility.

Mr. Secretary Acton, whose dinner it was, was a small, smooth-faced man, with indescribable eyes of pale green and a large mouth, out of which his words rolled slowly and voluminously, and who, when he was interrupted by remarks, increased the roll and volume to such an extent that one, shutting the eyes, would have thought there was a tall, hectoring bully in the room, instead of a dapper little fellow of five feet six.

Mr. Secretary Acton's M.P. had not yet been presented to the high position which he afterwards attained and from which he fulminated over the United Kingdom; the chief object, of his official thundering being innocent botanists and gardeners. But Mr. Secretary Acton expected that he would soon be promoted, and, in common with the three gentlemen who respectively "ran" their great men, he was anxious to hear about Ireland from the gentleman who "ran" Mr. O'Gee.

Mr. Secretary Wood was as meek as a missionary when he came in; his great man

affected music, as was very apparent, for he had no sooner said, "How d'ye do?" than he sat down and played a religious symphony, only stopping when Messrs. Secretaries Sillars and Wallace entered together, the former a sagacious mortal with a habit of looking down at the toe of his boot, as if he were rather ashamed of the red nose he possessed through no fault of his own; the latter a tall, ungainly man, with thick lips and an aristocratic poise of the body which suggested that he must be much among noblemen or, hoping to be, was then in training.

"Captain O'Brien, Sillars," hectored Secretary Acton. "Mr. Wallace, Captain O'Brien. I think we may go downstairs if Wood will let that grand piano alone. He's got symphony on the brain. I believe Forest, M.P., thinks symphony is to pacify Ireland, extend the franchise, educate the masses——"

"Dem," said Secretary Wallace, "I hope you are not going to take up these topics *seriatim*, Acton, and expound them."

"Roses in November, captain? Rather good, isn't it? Had them from Lady Whig, who grows them all the year round. She has,

or some one has discovered for her, the secret of inverting the seasons. It's a little confusing to the average mind, but not at all unpleasant in its way."

"In our climate, roses in November are no rarity," said Finn stoutly, fingering his studs as he sat down. "On my little place at the Shannon, I have no doubt the gardener has a crop of roses in full blow. He is a utilitarian, however, and has no objection to the big roses for feeding the pigs, *i.e.*, when they have lost their first freshness."

"Rose-fed pigs did you say?" asked Mr. Secretary Wood, laying down his spoon and taking out his note-book, "if you will excuse me I shall take a note of that. It is a new use, so far as I am aware, for the rose to be put to." "Rose-fed pigs," he wrote down. "Captain O'Brien, six feet, large mouth and jaw, deep dark eyes, sparkling when he speaks, fresh complexion, country youth—knowing."

"Dem!" said Mr. Secretary Wallace again. "Can't you finish your soup and keep your private comments for another time? It makes a fellow feel as if you were whispering scandals

to another fellow down the back of his own neck."

"Oh, I should think you are booked long ago, Wallace," said the red-nosed Sillars, softly adding, as if he were addressing a witness in a court-house, "You have a property on the Shannon, Mr.—eh—Captain O'Brien?"

"I have," said Finn swiftly, adding, "perhaps you know some of my neighbours. I may say at once that my political views have ostracised me on the Shannon. I don't shoot, fish, hunt, dance, dine, or go to law with any of them. We carry political feeling to a greater extent over there than you do here. Are you interested in the Irish Question?"

Finn was fluent, and had a positive way of announcing his views which impressed his auditors.

"In Parliament," said Mr. Secretary Sillars, softly as before, and looking from Acton to Wallace and from Wallace to Wood, "it is and will be the only question for some time to come. You, of course know, captain, that we were aware of a rumour, amounting almost to a positive fact, that a new party is about to emerge, tying Ireland together, as it were, from

North to South, and uniting it for a new effort at Repeal."

"What's in a rumour?" asked Finn didactically. "Statesmen should deal with ascertained facts."

The four secretaries felt the compliment, and looked into Lady Whig's roses as if they saw the future of Ireland among the petals.

"The authors of the rumour appear to overlook the circumstance," continued Finn in a platform voice, "that there are two Irelands, one known to the light of day, another, and I believe the true Ireland, known to the darkness of night. The light-of-day Ireland may propose, but it's the darkness-of-night Ireland which in the long run must dispose; and there can be no talk of tying up, even for Repeal, unless the true Ireland is convinced."

"As a landowner," said Mr. Sillars, again, as if he were cross-examining a witness, "your experience will not be that there are many Nationalists in your class."

"Well, he'll be a clever man who would tell where the Nationalists are. They're like the Jesuits—everywhere—and exactly in those places you would least expect to find them.

Perhaps I'm a bit of a Nationalist myself."

"Dem!" said Mr. Secretary Wallace, clearing his throat to speak—but Mr. Secretary Acton hectorcd for fully a quarter of an hour upon the Pope and gave him no chance, and when he had one, Mr. Secretary Sillars began to talk about national education, after which Mr. Secretary Wood, meekly but pertinaciously, renewed the rose question, and asked Finn if he could not be induced to grow tobacco and cultivate silk upon the Shannon.

The talk of the statesmen was greatly to Finn's mind: Such expressions as "Sillars, my dear fellow, you know that Bill I am working up"—"Well, Acton, old boy, we of course all understand your ambition"—"It's quite simple. Only that Lithgow shall rule England and I shall rule Lithgow. And by Jove, it shall be done."—There was something highly exhilarating in the wave of the hand given by Mr. Secretary Sillars when he settled the Vatican, and even the "Dem" of Mr. Secretary Wallace, coming out like a cough to which no culpability attached, had piquancy for the ear of the Irishman, which was only subse-

quently destroyed by the impregnable Scotch accent with which he delivered his opinions. There was a magnificence of universal allusiveness, too, which Finn envied. Confined as he had been to a nook of Ireland, he found that his own vision was, spite of himself, circumscribed; but the statesmen fled on the wings of information from Washington to Pekin, taking in all the intermediate capitals by the way, lit upon embassies and exploited the characters of individuals, kingdoms, policies, in a manner which bewildered and delighted him. By the time they had passed round a cigar-box, Finn felt as if he were a crowned head with four emperors about him. And the mingled drinks of the dinner-table flowed so pleasantly in his veins that he could not resist standing up to make a speech. He told Mr. Secretary Acton that he believed with him that the Impenitent Thief would be compelled to throw down his spoil and appeal to the country. He was not authorised to say so, but he believed that O'Gee would cast all his weight into the scale of their party, the emancipating party—(“Authorise yourself,” said Mr. Secretary Acton, “and he will come

round. We are the real rulers. They are only our mouthpieces.")—the great Liberal Party. And so on and so on. Nobody replied, but the robust eloquence of Finn, wine-inspired though it was, raised him considerably in the estimation of the statesmen.

"Possible O'Connell," reflected Mr. Secretary Wood, with his thoughts upon¹ his notebook.

"I am afraid," reflected Sillars, "that the next election will remove you to another sphere."

"We can co-operate," said Mr. Acton.

"Irishmen have a positive genius for blarney," said Secretary Wallace.

Finn returned to Bloomsbury in a hansom, and the secretaries sat in judgment upon him.

"He is a sieve," decided Secretary Acton.

"He is a big gooseberry," said Mr. Wood.

"He is a dangerous Fenian," concluded Mr. Sillars.

"He has kissed the Blarney Stone," urged Mr. Wallace.

Finn reached his rooms without accident, but a curious thing occurred when he was un-

dressing at his bed-room window, his shadow being on the blind. No sound of shooting was audible outside, but a ball penetrated a pane and lodged in the panelling of his bed-room door. He stooped and blew out his light. Another ball entered and struck the back of his looking-glass. He groped his way from the line of the window and sat down on a chair in the dark, and he remained there for an hour, remembering that he had chosen to go to Acton's rather than to a meeting of his secret society, and that the bullets were an announcement of the punishment decreed him.

Then he rose, lit his candle again, picked the bullets from the glass and door, and concluded that they must have been discharged from an air-gun.

CHAPTER VIII.

GORTON BECOMES DISAGREEABLE.

THE discovery that Captain Jeffery was Mrs. Lynch's brother made a considerable change at the County Club. The Admiration Brotherhood broke up, and a new tone was introduced into the discussion of "Beatrice." She rather encouraged the use by others of her maiden name; but the captain snubbed every allusion to his sister which took that form. He snubbed the commander of the gun-boat, and the magistrate, and De Burgh, and Lord Mountinnes: he would have snubbed his colonel if that potentate had attempted to make use of the familiarity so long current among the unmarried men who were all willing to marry if "Beatrice" would only make up her mind to change her condition.

He was thus rather a repressive agency at the club, and of late he had developed a

heavy style of sighing and looking deeply in trouble, which accorded badly with social life. His trouble we know; he had married, and was unwilling to take the responsibility of his act before the world; not because he was ashamed of his wife, for his passion was deeper than he even supposed it to be, but he was not yet prepared to introduce her to his friends, and would not be, till she had learnt some of the conventional ways which would fit her for dining-rooms and drawing-rooms. But he did not feel that there was so much hurry for pressing on her education. She was so entirely to his mind by her piquant ignorance of any life beyond the life of natural, healthy animalism, that he felt it would be dusting the down from the wings of the butterfly to enlighten her more. After all, the regiment was likely to be some considerable time in the West, and it would be easier to wait and postpone the acknowledgment till a more suitable date.

Eileen was in no hurry, rather shrunk in fact from any sort of publicity; why should he dispute her right to the most entire privacy? That was all very well, but Jeffery forgot the

supervision of the Nunnery, forgot that Sister Maria had seen a lithe figure, in a soldier's hood, cross the bridge and go into the cottage beneath the Nunnery walls time after time, and in view of the circumstance had urged Eileen to a speedy and good confession. The girl had gone to confession, under Sister Maria's advice, and for the first time in her life, perhaps, prevaricated at the priest's window. There were others, too, who had seen the lithe figure, in a soldier's hood, stealing away from the cottage door, and Eileen was beginning to be aware that in the Claddagh there were signs of disapproval. Not to any great extent; still there were signs, 'as when Conny Carmichael, whose father was only waiting the news of Michael's death to become king and admiral and judge to the community, said to a group of lasses at the pier-head, "Here comes mother Eileen."

* * * * *

The snubbing of people is not a popular pursuit; it is apt to react on the snubber, as Jeffery felt at his club in the matter of his sister's maiden name. He was not so popular as he had been; and the alteration in his own

manner which brought the change into other people's faces was disagreeable to him; yet the first thing he did was to vehemently snub Gorton, who was writing at a window. It came about in this way:—Mr. Gorton had not been long in the club before he had assured his position. No one there had anything like a similar range of knowledge, a readier wit or a fuller purse; his was the only purse which was full; on military subjects, too, he had shown so much conversational knowledge that he had established a sort of dictatorship, even when there were practical soldiers standing by. Jeffery resented the dictatorship, but he hated still more a suspicion that Gorton knew Eileen, and that in some way he was connected with the mysterious carrying of the banner.

As the magistrate regarded him at first he continued to regard him; he thought him, that is, a dangerous man, but how or why he was dangerous he had no knowledge. Gorton turned on his elbow as the captain sauntered into the room and wished him an elaborate "Good day."

It was one of Gorton's peculiarities that he

sometimes uttered commonplaces as if they were sarcasms, and on this occasion the captain did not respond.

“Sorry to hear about your sister’s misfortune,” said Gorton, facing right round, and looking sardonically at the captain ringing the bell.

“Been misinformed,” said Jeffery coldly. “No misfortune that I know of; Mrs. Lynch is very well—Angostura and whiskey, please.”

“All right in health, yes, that I believe. She’s a superlatively fine woman, sir, if I may be allowed to make the remark to her own brother—a superlatively fine woman. I saw her on horseback this very day, and there’s nothing more goddess-like in these parts. I allude to the transfer of the estates, sir, the Lynch property, to a girl in the Ciaddagh—a poor fish-fag, who, it seems, is the real princess. I shall be sorry to hear of your sister having to resign. But it’s a world full of ups and downs, sir. What would you say was the amount of postage for a package this size to Amsterdam?”

“Damn your impertinence,” said Jeffery. “If my sister does come out of Tasmania,

what is that to you? She don't want your opinion; she won't ask your sympathy; and as for your allusion to a fish-fag, hang me if I don't feel inclined to break your head, irrespective of club regulations."

"Mr. Jeffery," said Gorton with cool deliberation, rising to his full height and looking cadaverous about the jaws, "there's a regulation way of going about things. You are a very young man; but you are capable of offering an insult. I take it, and I throw it back at you, and you may choose a friend, and a weapon, a day and a place whenever you like."

The whole thing was like the metaphorical bolt in the metaphorical clear sky; it occurred so rapidly that the servant had not brought Jeffery's *Atigostura* till the scene was enacted.

"You are very good," said Jeffery, "but I like the liberty of choosing my opponents also. I rather think you are hardly worth powder and shot——"

"Well, sir, if I thought you were an impudent young mouth, you may take it that I did not regard you as a cur which I now know you are. A cur, sir, with an officer's uniform,

which is almost as if the ass wore the lion's skin and the sheep took upon him to be a wolf. Charles, what would you say might be the stamps required for that package to Amsterdam?"

The interview might have been enough for one day, but as luck would have it, the men met again. The Claddagh—that part of it at least which was not at sea—retired early to bed; but Eileen's wick was always at the seaward window. Her father might come at any time—and her husband might do the same. God help her in her great anxiety!

When Jeffery that evening crossed the little bridge and ascended to the porch, he heard voices within. Eileen's father back? No, not her father, he could make out, but his nasal friend who had called him a cur a few hours before. He put his fingers on the latch and found the door was barred; he put his back to the door and swept the wooden barrier aside. The bar had been his own invention and had, indeed, been put in its place by his own hand.

When he turned to confront his wife, he was white with passion; for, by the light of her

wax candle burning on the mantelpiece, there was revealed to him Gorton—a banner on his arm of the identical colours Eileen had worn during her journey. She had a gold cross at her throat, and—God! was it possible? Was this child of nature false to him? Was this girl he had made his wife because, far removed from corrupting influences, she seemed to him to have retained her virgin purity as intact as a spring among the hills its clearness—was she open to the solicitations of this vulgar fellow, his own and most intimate enemy?

Gorton stood with his back to the fire, bending with the flag as a haberdasher might bend showing an article of apparel.

There was no shade of disturbance in the saturnine coolness of his face; only his left hand was at his revolver pocket. Eileen understood the movement, and threw herself between the men.

Jeffery was speechless with anger; but presently he recovered himself, and, Gorton having remarked that he was obliged to him for dodging his footsteps, and was glad to think that he had the enthusiasm of the duel, which was very proper and becoming in “an

officer and gentleman," Jeffery drawled to Eileen, "Er—your people have supplied the Barracks with codfish for some little time—er, if there is a good take to-night or to-morrow night, keep us in mind, will you?"

"Very prettily done," reflected Gorton, who remembered the farewell scene in the square. "Very prettily done," he murmured, as Jeffery retired slowly to the door.

The conflict of passion in man and wife showed so visibly in their faces that it was as good as a play to him. He liked it, not realizing that they were man and wife, but only seeing an infatuated young officer, who had himself offered a deadly insult in the afternoon, baffled in a little sweethearting in the evening.

"You called her a fish-fag in the afternoon," said Jeffery, unable to take himself away. "Coward that you are, I shall send somebody to your mill to-morrow. In the meantime——"

The cool eye of the Yankee was measuring him; he had withdrawn his hand from the revolver pocket, and, with his arms folded, the Sunburst hung in front of him.

"Do you think it the correct thing to be here at this time?" drawled the Yankee.

"Oh, he has a right, he has a right," cried Eileen, rushing to the door.

But he was gone, and though she fled after him to the bridge, he was gone beyond recall, that night.

CHAPTER IX.

INTERMEDIATION.

LONG before daylight had lit up the bay and the city of Galport, Eileen Conran was on her way to Tasmania,

The night before she had returned from the bridge and her futile search for her husband to the hearth where Gorton was standing.

He had given her an option either of abandoning Jeffery or of giving up the cause, and had told her that the liberation of Ireland could only be undertaken by pure women in whose thoughts there was no taint of affection for the alien.

"What is the right you talked about?" asked the general, enveloping her in the mystic flag; but Eileen, shivering unwound herself from its grasp and flung it, as if it were a deadly living thing, on the floor.

"We are disappointed in you," he continued;

“ the Ireland which lives out yonder, and hopes, and schemes, and has deputed me here to carry on the war against England, that Ireland is disappointed in the Conrans.”

“ Oh, have we not sacrificed all for the cause ? ” said the girl, “ and what more is it you want—the blood of the young man is it, and no harm in him, no harm whatever, but good only, and kindness to me and mine ? Oh, the Ireland out yonder may be disappointed, but I’m weary of plot, plot, plotting, General Gorton ; tired to death I am, and see nothing that is to come of it. It’s always talk of Sunburst and Sunrise, and the sun never rises at all but on the same poor starving race and the same weeping shores. You’ve taken my father from me, you have, and now—and now——” and Eileen sobbed on her elbow.

“ And now,” said Gorton, dashing his tone of command with an accent of tenderness, “ I will take your false love from you, and give you back Ireland to your warm heart from which he has driven it. To-morrow, Eileen, there will be no longer a Jeffery to trouble you with visits. Take my word for it, and now think no more of him ; think rather of those

regiments of strong men drilling among the hills and on the beaches, to whom you have given out pistols and pikes and guns, and of the good red days that are coming. Stoop down, girl, and take the Sunburst flag in your hand, and tie yourself securely in the banner of freedom. You will take it to the Shannon, and by that time half the work will have been done."

Spite of herself the girl stopped her sobbing and bent for the flag and made a sash of it, as she had worn the other on the journey westward. Gorton's influence was more than the influence of a father-confessor to her; she was compelled to do exactly what he bade her. But when he ceased speaking, she raised her tear-stained cheeks to him and said,

"If you remove him, I am dead to the cause, dead, dead to everything."•

He only bade her good-night, however, and gave her no assurance that something terrible might not happen on the morrow.

She went out in the early morning, therefore, to Tasmania, to carry her great dread to the ears of Mrs. Lynch and to get something put in the way of the death which threatened her husband.

It was pitch-dark as she plodded up the highway to the gate-house; there was no light in the window; not a soul was stirring in Tasmania; the cocks had not begun to crow for the day at the home farm.

But Eileen rang as if it were mid-day, and went on ringing till a head appeared at an upper window, and exclaimed,

“Ye thief o’ the worruld! if it wasn’t for the dark night it is, I’d make the light dance in your eyes.”

• “It’s me, Dan, Eileen from the Claddagh it is—and it’s in I must come at once.”

She did not get in just at once, for it took the man about a quarter of an hour to dress and grope his way down-stairs.

Once inside, however, she stood to make no explanations, but rushed straight to Mrs. Lynch’s room.

“Madam, madam, forgive me,” she exclaimed at the foot of her bed, while the servant who had let her in called frantically from the door,

“For the love o’ God, now, come out o’ that this moment!”

“Sin, what in the world has happened?”

Why do you come to me in that hysterical style? ”

“It’s not Terry at all, at all,” cried Eileen, “it’s me, Eileen Conran, and I’ve come early to your bedside because—oh!—there is no time to lose, for blood might be spilt, your own brother’s blood.”

Mrs. Lynch sat up in bed and touched a bell, and after a pause Theresina, already roused, entered with a light.

“Now come and explain to me. Why, it’s quite an unearthly hour,” continued Mrs. Lynch, dragging her watch and chain from beneath her pillow. “And you, Sin, leave the light and the room, and get back to your bed. I shall ring for you when I want you. Now, Eileen, what is this sanguinary horror you have brought to my bedside? ”

“Madam, it’s easy told. General Gorton has quarrelled with Captain Jeffery and they have agreed to murder each other. Separate them. Come down to the city and separate them, for the love of God and the saints in high heaven.”

“General—general who? Why should a man in that position want to kill a captain?

What has my brother done to him? And who is General Gorton?"

"He is the great miller on the river, who has ships on the sea, and power, and—oh, madam, rise, and for mercy's sake come down to the city with me."

Mrs. Lynch got into a dressing-gown, rubbed her eyes, rang the bell again, and with her white hand upon her whiter bosom gave her orders.

"Sin, make coffee at once. Let Dan have the dog-cart ready—where is this infamous thing going to take place?—and brought round as soon as possible. Put the black mare in, and see that there are no bits of twine on the reins. My boots, yes, and my waterproof, yes. Help yourself, Eileen, as soon as the coffee comes. I suppose it is a duel; the ridiculous, the outrageously ridiculous men; and a general officer too. What is the general's name? Gorton—ah, yes, the miller, to be sure, but who made him a general? I thought my brother and he were on very good terms."

"Did I call him general, madam? Well, it's confused I am. I mean the miller, and it's the miller who is to fight the captain."

“Well, it was very good of you to come and tell me. You may have prevented great mischief. Take time to your coffee. They cannot possibly fight till day-light has appeared.”

The dog-cart was speedily brought to the front door, and Mrs. Lynch took the reins, while Eileen got up behind.

“Eileen, where will I find this man, this would-be murderer? Is he at his mill before day-break?”

“You are safe, madam, to drive there. He is an early riser.”

And thither she drove, galloping half the way in a reckless, downward course, which threatened ever and anon to throw herself and Eileen on the road.

Gorton was early at the mill. He had, indeed, revolutionised the river in that respect. Previous to his time no work had been done before eleven a.m. Even then men used to go down to the quays rubbing their eyes and yawning. Now they were expected to appear at seven a.m., and to do a couple of hours' work to appetise themselves for their breakfasts. But, as the dog-cart swung round the city bridge in view of the mill, there were no

workmen visible at the quays. The morning mist was still on the water; but it was lifting, and objects were becoming plain to the eye.

"I shall get down, madam, and wait. I would rather not be seen," said Eileen, slipping off the dog-cart, just as a pistol-shot reached their ears. "Oh, Mother of God, my beloved! There's blood on the ground already."

But the dog-cart sped onwards to the mill, and another shot was fired. Mrs. Lynch leapt down at the entrance. As yet there was no machinery in motion; there was nobody in the mill except a gaunt figure, in his shirt sleeves, aiming at a tin soup-plate, placed against an opposite wall.

"You are practising, Mr. Gorton, very early. Now promise me, as you are the cleverest miller in Ireland, and hope to finish all the grain you have from my estates, that you will fire your pistol at nothing less fallible than a soup-plate on a wall?"

Gorton came out and bowed elaborately; while he wiped the muzzle of his pistol on one leg, he held his right hand out to shake Mrs. Lynch's.

"You are early astir, Mrs. Lynch. Can I do anything for you?"

"A good deal, Mr. Gorton."

"You make me very proud and pleased."

"First of all, then, you will promise me, without condition, to do what I ask. I have driven down in the dark from Tasmania, to ask you, and I expect to be rewarded."

Gorton understood at once that he was to be asked to abandon the duel. Nothing could be more satisfactory to him than to adopt that course. He was quite prepared to go out, but he felt that it was endangering a precious life against the life of a puppy, and, whether he were shot or not, endangering the whole cause he had at heart, for, of course, if he wounded or killed the puppy, he must himself run. He was glad, therefore, to listen to Mrs. Lynch, and to tell her that she might ask anything, unconditionally, and he would grant it.

"You will not fight that duel with Captain Jeffery, then? You will decline to go out?"

"Barring insult, madam, I pledge myself; for I should be sorry for the young man. You observe the tin plate, madam. Well, now what do you think of this?"

He turned and sent the contents of the barrel into the opposite wall.

“It isn’t that I hit the plate, Mrs. Lynch. No, anybody could do that; but it’s that I hit the plate to the point of a nail where I aimed: I’m sorry to say that it’s a habit I have; I can’t help it. Wherever I aim I hit, and I was just counting up the expenses of Captain Jeffery’s funeral when you stood in that doorway. Everything considered, I believe the best thing that could happen to the young man is that the duel should not come off. And I ain’t a sensitive man, where there is nothing national concerned. Now, madam—would you believe me?—he took offence at me for a supposed insult to you—to you, for whom I entertain the highest esteem and regard. All I said was nothing more than that I was sorry to hear you had a plea at law that might substitute for you a successor at Tasmania before you died—and the lad flared up and I’m not, upon my soul and conscience, the least anxious to have his blood.”

“If you hear nothing more of the duel then, you will say nothing more of it?”

“Nothing, if the captain keeps a quiet tongue in his head.”

“Good morning, then, Mr. Gorton; I will pledge myself for Captain Jeffery that you will hear nothing more of it.”

And mounting to her seat Mrs. Lynch drove rapidly back to the bridge. Eileen was waiting, and for the first time Mrs. Lynch noticed how worn and sorrowful she looked, how unlike the fresh, lively girl to whom she had spoken on the sands some months before. Why should she look so? Why, indeed, should she so vitally interest herself in this quarrel at all?

“No, Eileen, there has been nothing. No duel. No bloodshed. Mount, and we will go together to the Barracks. It is right that my brother should see how deeply you are interested in him, and hear from me what it is you have saved him from.”

Eileen got up again, and they drove through the great square to the Barracks.

Captain Jeffery was inspecting the stables. He, too, was jaded and spiritless in his aspect, and not at all so lively as the Yankee. He did not appear to have slept during the night, and his sister told him so, as he came to the door with a fork in his hand, with which he

had evidently been reproaching an idle groom.

"Not slept; no, not much," said the captain, throwing a glance of love and reproach at Eileen, as if she were solely to blame for the sleeplessness.

"Well, brother, I am going away; I am obliged to open house in London rather early this year, I am sorry to say, and I have a request to make. You will grant me it, Arthur?"

He looked from his sister's face to his wife's and back. A request? Had Eileen, then, declared their relationship to save him from duelling?

"Say on," he replied, looking to the ground.

"If Mr. Gorton says no more of the duel, neither will you?"

"Gorton is a blackguard," said Jeffery, "he wants to sneak out. You have seen him. He has put you up to this. I will go to his mill with a horse-whip and take satisfaction off his Yankee hide in that way, if he will not risk the other."

"Arthur," said Mrs. Lynch, without betraying a particle of emotion, "Mr. Gorton may be

a blackguard—at least he is no coward. You would have no difficulty in getting a meeting, if you pressed for it; but I am asking you to grant me a favour. If you hear nothing more of this duel, will you please to consider it at an end?”

“Here comes the colonel’s orderly. Not another word. Yes.”

“The colonel’s compliments, sir, and would the lady be pleased to take breakfast.”

The colonel was bowing at a window; Mrs. Lynch nodded to him, declining to go up.

“Arthur,” she said, “whisper,” and Jeffery walked to the wheel of the dog-cart, towards which the widow was stooping. “This is the claimant to the estates.”

“I know,” said Jeffery ruefully.

“Good morning.”

CHAPTER X.

WOOLING.

MRS. LYNCH's resolution to go to London had been taken a good deal because of the prospective law-plea. As yet she did not understand what her attitude in the matter should be. If it was indeed the case that she occupied the estates to the prejudice of a rightful heir, she felt that the rightful heir ought to have the door opened for her at once. In talking the matter over with her agent at Galport she had told him that such was her feeling. But that astute man of business pointed out to her that possession was nine points of the law, that for her son's sake it was her duty to contest the right as long as the courts would recognise it, and that, in the meantime, so uncertain a thing was human life, events might occur which would remove all the claims that disturbed her.

Father John took the same view, and Father

Hugh, whom she consulted about it by letter, wrote her to say that the circumstances which had induced the Church to abandon all previous claims to the estates would probably recur, with the same results, but if she felt her own conscience ill at ease, and her sense of justice crying out for restitution of the property, then she ought to follow the dictates she prayerfully considered to be heavenly inspiration.

It was a confusing affair altogether; but in the first place she thought she could do nothing better than go to London.

Being in London meant being near O'Brien; she hoped it meant that, and the longer she was away from him the more she felt that proximity to that lively young Irishman was a desirable thing for her peace of mind. Every other consideration sunk into insignificance compared with the eagerness she felt that he should preserve for her that chivalrous affection she had pooh-poohed so much, and which she had watched grow beneath the influence of her own beauty. Mrs. Lynch had no intention of falling in love with the lad. She did not admit to herself that she was in love with him. She only allowed herself to believe that she was

interested in him and that she appreciated his admiration of her more than that bestowed on her by the members of the Admiration Society, and she hoped that she might be able to do him some substantial service, poor waif that he was, for his country's good. Yet, if she had examined her heart aright at this stage of her experience, she would have discovered that the estates were nothing to her, and that O'Brien was nearly everything—that her religion even, and her enthusiasm for Irish ideas, were but separate waves from the same current setting in tides of affection to and from her heart.

The announcement that Mrs. Lynch was going to London threw the Admiration Society into fits. "The light of life gone out," "The joy of the West departed," "No more excitement for anybody," "Er—the Doose she is," "Shall up anchor and go"—such were some of the remarks emitted amidst clouds of smoke; but it was agreed that as Beatrice evidently desired to go away quietly none of the admirers should trouble her.

The magistrate, however, hung about the dark station on the morning when she left, and

a little to the widow's confusion, just as she had got everything arranged on the racks and the seats of the railway carriage, inserted his arms and his head.

"Good gracious!" said Mrs. Lynch, "I was expecting Arthur. How you surprised me, to be sure."

"Ah, Beatrice!"

"Please not, Mr. Butler. And why do you talk with tears in your voice? It is no very unusual journey to take—the voyage to London."

"Only 'Beatrice' this once, and I have done. I want to say that I release you from—from any feeling of engagement you may have had. Now that your brother has returned, I feel that you have really some one calculated to support you in your difficult position."

"Thanks so much, Mr. Butler; but I had really taken the liberty of releasing myself. You took an unfair advantage of me in the heat of pursuing a fish. Still, it is perhaps very good of you to be magnanimous, and it is very good of you to come down on a dark morning to a gloomy station like this—take care—train's off—good-bye, and tell Arthur I expected to see

him here—Morris has gone to the Barracks for a little—good-bye.”

From Galport to Dublin was the better part of a day's journey; but it was lightened for Mrs. Lynch by the unexpected appearance of Father Hugh Kenealy at Athgar Station.

Athgar is in the heart of Ireland, far from Loop Head and Father Hugh's parish, and it was with no little surprise that she saw his classical head and priestly figure emerge from a refreshment-room with a loaf and a jug.

“Father Hugh,” she exclaimed, waving her sandwich at him, and he stopped. He was travelling third class to Dublin, and had gone out, he said, to fetch a loaf and some cold water for a carriageful of poor boys who had eaten nothing all day.

“You will come in here?” she asked, showing him a carriage in which there was nobody but herself.

“You are travelling beyond my means”; said the priest, “and my inclination,” he added as Mrs. Lynch looked into her purse.

“Please let me make it a first class,” she pleaded. And when he would not, she lifted her cloak and bag and said,

“I shall come amongst your hungry boys, then.”

But Father Hugh would not allow her to do that; rather he would comply with her wish, and let her pay the difference of his fare to Dublin. It turned out that he was going further than Dublin; he had been deputed to represent to someone very high up in the English political world what it was the Roman Catholics of Ireland wanted, in the agitation for the disestablishment of the English Church. Not that anything was anticipated from the government in power, but a change of ministry was shortly expected, and it was Father Hugh's privilege to be called from Loop Head, and his study of round towers, to coach an eminent man, desirous of knowing every point which he could make against the existing establishment. The priest travelled with Mrs. Lynch from Kingston to Holyhead, and bade her good-bye at St. Pancras, promising at no distant date to call on her at Clarges Street. Mrs. Lynch could get nothing definite by way of advice about the estates. He encouraged her, however, in the first instance, in resisting the new claim; the

case could not possibly be taken into the courts without a great deal of preliminary business; and delay, he said, was the weapon which business men most relied upon, and which, until she was otherwise enlightened, she had better allow herself to use.

* * * * *

Mrs. Lynch did not open her whole house at Clarges Street; only two floors of it, and she satisfied herself with one male attendant. On the second evening after her arrival the attendant announced "Captain O'Brien."

Mrs. Lynch was in the inner division of her drawing-room when Finn made his appearance. Contrary to all her own expectations, she was conscious of a profound nervousness affecting every limb and sense, as she rose from her piano to greet him.

She had not seen him since that unfortunate day when the principal had ordered him into the street from the college of Galport. How much he had gone through since then! And with man and circumstances against him, how well he had come out of it!

She was superbly dressed in a black brocade, with rich lace at throat and wrists, and in her

breast one white lily shed its lustre, in her hair one gleaming spray of diamonds. Finn stumbled midway, as the attendant closed the door, and felt that it was the instinctive obeisance to a goddess. He could have gone down on his knees and worshipped her where she stood. He did not know it, but there was a mist in the widow's eyes as she looked at him. She hardly saw him at all for some seconds, for the whole situation was presenting itself to her mind with a new enlightenment. There was an impulsion which she could not resist. She felt that she was on the eve of giving herself up to this young man. She knew that she would give herself to him if he were only to ask her hand. She hardly could realise whether she would care for marriage; but at the moment it seemed to her, if she were asked, she could not refuse.

It was a curious moment, as they stood looking at each other, he as rawly and youngly full of affection as he had ever been in the West, she not so capable of cooling and suppressing the affection by an attitude of banter. There was a perfect sincerity of devotion on O'Brien's side, but it happened that his first

words had a theatrical ring in them, and Mrs. Lynch was saved.

"Madam," said Finn, "I've been dreaming night and day, day and night of this interview."

"Then waken up," she said gaily, passing her hand across her own eyes, and extending it to her visitor. "I am so pleased to see you. But why is it 'Captain' O'Brien? The servant mistook, I suppose?"

Finn had got so used to his military title that it had not struck him. He had even some thought of putting it on his card.

"Oh, I am Captain to everybody in London."

He stood, retaining her hand in his, and, again a little theatrically, he raised her fingers to his lips. She did not resist; indeed the pressure of his lips sent a thrill of exultation to her heart, and she was conscious of a glow of fondness as she saw his stooping head and shoulders.

The same, yet so different in a few months! Perhaps there was something theatrical in the tone of his voice, a tone which was one part Cockney and two parts Irish, but wholly and tremulously affectionate.

"Poor O'Brien!" she exclaimed, "you have

really suffered your own share of misfortune for your country's sake. Sit down and tell me some of your experiences."

"Not yet," said Finn, with all the drama out of him, and nothing but emotion, sincere and personal to himself.

They looked at each other, and she was again aware of that propulsion, by her own will, which seemed hurrying her into his arms.

"Not yet," he said, looking sadly at her. "I would rather wait. It's your own voice that I'm dying to hear, and your own words that I need to cheer me."

Mrs. Lynch turned aside, sat down, and motioned him silently into a chair.

"Well, I shall talk when I have found my topics."

But in the meantime they continued looking at each other in silence.

Mrs. Lynch knew that Finn O'Brien was no other than the peasant lad of the magistrate's description. She knew that he had talked vaguely of owning property on the Shannon, and that he had no property; and, from Father Hugh's account, was only an industrious Irish lad, discovering in himself

gifts of expression and of personal influence, which had hurried him from a petty farm to a national platform. She suspected, also, that the titles to the property from which she drew her income had been tossed into Galport Bay by him.

And she was not at all certain that he had not serious proclivities towards Fenianism. Assuredly, he was not faultless, if she must give herself to him.

But there was one sincerity in the midst of his insincerities, one truthfulness glowing in his eloquent face, and that was invincible devotion to herself. He loved her as she had never been loved before; he was true to her; she would let the rest go in the large satisfaction of his love, which had the ardour and attraction of fresh youth and enthusiasm to recommend it.

"You are quite famous," she said presently, "everybody knows you now. I heard you discussed in the saloon of the "Munster" when we were crossing to England. It sounded so odd. It seemed so natural for me to join in and say, 'Oh, I know him. All about him. He is a Shannon O'Brien, not an O'Brien

from Ulster. I have had letters from him, and really could tell you all the policy of the talking party, if I liked to do it.' ”

Finn's face glowed with satisfaction; next to his love for Mrs. Lynch was his love for popularity in Ireland. He showed his weakness by striking his knee with his fist, and exclaiming,

“I must *do* something. I am burning to address a crowd and to tell them of Ireland's sorrow and England's iniquity: to be really and truly known as a champion dealing blows for his native land.”

“Please not,” said Mrs. Lynch, appealingly. “I suppose there is no doubt you will yet go into Parliament. You will be safe there. Wait.”

“Anything, if you bid me.”

“Well, begin and tell me how you like London. How you like Mr. O'Gee, whether you are seeing anybody, and then I shall ask your advice about my estates.”

“I am very well placed with Mr. O'Gee. They say that no man is a hero to his valet. But to his secretary, I assure you, Mr. O'Gee is a hero. He is so full of enthusiasm, and

power and kindness too. He has been a good friend to me, and we pull together beautifully. He already talks of finding me a borough."

"Bravo," said Mrs. Lynch, clasping her hands, and feeling a genuine pride in the youth. "I shall rejoice to see you at Westminster. You will show me into 'the cage' sometimes, and let me hear you thundering."

Finn threw himself back and laughed loud and long.

"It's my ambition," he said, when he had recovered his breath.

Mrs. Lynch rose and sat down at her piano and played—

"O my Nora Creina, dear !
My gentle, bashful Nora Creina !
Beauty lies
In many eyes
But love in yours, my Nora Creina !"

She stopped and looking archly at him, said,

"And she—what does she say to it all?"

"She—who?"

"Why, I thought you had left a Nora Creina behind you, who 'presumed to stay where nature placed it,' and that——"

"You tantalize me," said Finn, approaching

the piano, and leaning over it till his glowing face was at no great distance from Mrs. Lynch's.

"You know, you ought to know, that for me beauty only lies in one pair of eyes, and that they belong to you."

"Not so loud, dear," said Mrs. Lynch softly. "Sing, it will do you good. This will suit you. You know it of course.

'The time I've lost in wooing,
In watching and pursuing,
The light that lies in woman's eyes
Has been my heart's undoing.
Though wisdom oft has taught me,
I scorn the love that bought me,
My only books
Were women's looks
And folly's all they've taught me.'

Finn took up the second verse and sang with enthusiasm,

"Her smile when beauty granted,
I hung with gaze enchanted—"

Then he hummed nothing to the end of the verse, forgetting the intervening lines. The last verse he also forgot, till he came

to the end of the lines, when he launched into

“Poor wisdom’s chance,
Against a glance,
Is now as weak as ever !”

“It is all gossamer,” said the widow rising, and standing face to face with him, while she looked at him.

“Béatrice,” he said, “I believe you love me, and I will act on my belief.”

She did not resist him. She let him lightly kiss her on her brow; and she told him that she had questioned herself and found him in her heart, and that she would give herself to him on certain conditions.

“State them,” said Finn, triumphant, with his arm about her.

“That you will ever speak the truth to me. That you will forsake all secret societies, if you have ever belonged to them. That your love will last.”

“I accept them with a glad heart,” said Finn, and the attendant announced Father Hugh Kenealy.

CHAPTER XI.

PLOTTING.

FATHER HUGH KENEALY was shown into a room on another floor, but Mrs. Lynch told Finn that now he must go. She would herself tell the priest that she had accepted his addresses, that she regarded him as her betrothed, and that, certain conditions being observed, she would in course of time marry him.

"Finn," she said, "you will write to Loop Head, to your mother, and tell her of our betrothal. Father Hugh has already told me how excellent a woman she is, how nobly she works upon her little farm, and how much she is bound in affection to her son. I hope she will accept her prospective daughter without any feeling of injury. Good-night, dear; you will come again soon."

She allowed him to touch her brow with

his lips ; but she suppressed the ardent and hysterical affection of departure he would have liked to bestow upon her.

“ And Finn, you will ever speak the truth to me.”

“ Ever,” said Finn, disappearing, and receiving from Theresina, in the hall, a bulky packet from General Gorton.

“ Terry, how is my aunt ? ”

“ Well, please God.”

“ Back to Loughan ? ”

“ She is, please God.”

“ And are they meeting at her shebeen ? ”

“ They meet at the mill, now, Master O'Brien. Mrs. Lynch is calling. You're the lucky man, sir. All Ireland is talking of you.”

On his way home to Bloomsbury, Finn spent some 'pounds' on a shawl for his mother, the first gift he had given her, and had it despatched forthwith.

When he came into his room, he opened Gorton's packet and found it consisted of a letter and a map. From Donegal Bay to Waterford Harbour, Ireland was cut in two by a black line ; “ Ours ” was inscribed on the western segment, “ Theirs ” was marked on

the eastern. Each town which contained an English regiment or a company was emblazoned in scarlet, and all round about them were lines of deep green indicating the Irish regiments which a revolution might be expected to call up; such lines were massed numerously about Galport—indeed, to judge from the map, it appeared that nothing but latent revolution prevailed from bay to bay. North-west, south, south-west, it was a green sea of regimental waves surging round the red soldiery, and as Finn looked with understanding again at the map, he forgot for a little his vision of Woolwich and Chatham, and the suppressive power indicated in those quarters, and believed for the moment that the green sea could swamp the red rocks, if only the tide were directed in its rise.

Gorton's letter explained the map and said, "You have narrowly escaped an informer's death. Two bullets, I am told, were lodged in your window from an air-gun, by direction of the affiliated branch (Westminster) of No. XII. That, I may say, was a hasty proceeding, unwarranted in any way, as I understand you to be still on my staff, to be ready to act

when the time is ripe for action, and to be still unchanged in your allegiance to me, the society, and the cause. Personally, I do not take the same view of your secretaryship as the members of No. XII. affiliated. I believe you may consistently act for us, and still retain your position with O'Gee. For O'Gee I entertain the lowest opinion. He has done nothing for Ireland, everything for himself. He occupies a fictitious position, from which he must be brought down, if he cannot reach out an arm in our direction. In the meantime he is the thunder and we are the lightning. When he is mouthing loudest our knives are sharpest and our triggers at full cock. Stay with him, then, but in working for him make everything subservient to No. XII., everything leading up to the day of action, not now to be long postponed. O'Brien, I trust you for your oath's sake, for your country's sake, for your own sake. I believe there is no treason in you. The day of action will be ready when the present government goes out, and the country is busy with a general election. For a fortnight heads of departments will be occupied in counting the

polls. Everything will be confusion, and amid the smoke of their talk, our fire will be lit—so near, my officer, is the period of liberation. The next general election! A red election for Whigs and Tories! Study my map and see; the Sunburst will reveal itself to you there; not a garrison, not a police station, not a county house will stand on this side of “Ours;” before the panic shall have subsided in England, we shall have accomplished all. Take no heed of the recent bullets,* Finn O’Brien. They mean nothing; they are apologized for to me—the are but a hint of the destiny which awaits the man who puts his hand to our plough and turns back again. Adieu, and await orders.

“J. H. G.”

Finn burnt Gorton’s letter and put away the map in a safe place, among other similar communications. “Adieu, and await orders!” What might that not mean? And yet, it could not be supposed to mean much, for the fact of his secretaryship was forgiven him. If he were to remain secretary, he could not be called to do any of the revolutionary work which, like the attempted liberation of the

Manchester prisoners a few months before, and the subsequent bombardment of the prison walls of Clerkenwell, had been attended with such disastrous results to the Nationalist party. "Adieu, and await orders!" Finn murmured, as he set up a photograph of Mrs. Lynch upon his mantelpiece, leant his arm on the marble, and stared into it. "Nora Creina, then, is it darlin'?" said the lad, kissing the cold glass and staring with ardent eyes into every fold of the widow's dress. "There never was a Nora Creina. Only you. Only you."

He walked the floor of his apartment far on into the morning. He flung coat and vest from him, and strode about and about for hours, his brain hot and reeling, sleep denied him, and his mind capable of nought but an aimless whirl.

Surely he had happened upon great events since he was expelled from college and country, and one by one his circumstances rose before him with a staring definiteness which only increased his fever the more. Those long nights on the Atlantic Ocean and the English Channel, night after night they confronted him, with their starry vaults, and their singing winds and

their lapping water. The memory of them straightened his figure and made his heart beat higher. Yes, he too had attempted something for Old Ireland, had suffered a little for her, and would he forsake her now? Then Beatrice's words came to him, "You will ever speak the truth to me," and with his neck and face crimsoned, he remembered how he had told her of his stud of horses, his broad acres, his own conservatories, his salmon fishing, and other scenes of plenty, which he thought she would despise him if he were without. Tell the truth to her—yes, and it need not be so hard now, when he had a nominal income of £400, and was promised a borough, and rubbed shoulders with as many great people in a day as O'Gee's policy brought him in contact with. No, not so hard; but there must be a limit to truthfulness. About his oath, and the liberation of Ireland. How would Beatrice take that? He would dearly like to pour all his aspirations and facts about the liberation into her ear; but "the truth" must have a line drawn on it there. As a matter of fact, Finn was habituated to drawing lines on the truth. But, though he had a constitutional

inability to tell it, he was not exactly a vulgar liar.

He would not lie merely to earn a pound, or to hurt an acquaintance, or because he was in a scrape to get out of it. He lied, not so much through meanness of disposition, as through exuberance of imagination, and his untruths were at least as often errors of generosity as falsifications of fact.

Yet the serious demand of Beatrice Lynch that he should speak the truth made him pause and examine himself, and he was humbled to think that, hitherto, he had not been so literal and exact as Mrs. Lynch was to him and to everybody around her. For the future he resolved, that to her at least the sacred truth should be reserved, putting aside his connection with the secret society as something with which truth had nothing to do.

* * * * *

The talk about "a borough" was resumed between O'Gee and himself. The former had come to the conclusion that a man widely known to the secret societies would be a useful platform man on his own side. It would suggest to the Irreconcilables that, if they

would only bide their time, the constitutional agitation would coalesce, that they were nearer each other than might be supposed, and that unity for electoral purposes was a thing they ought to go in for.

"O'Brien," said O'Gee, "I have seriously made up my mind to run you at the next election. All the story of the police-raid will have become ancient history by that time; you may go back to Ireland and nobody will look at you. The election may be on us any day."

"Adieu and await orders," murmured Finn inaudibly, feeling that he was being dragged twenty ways at once, and wondering whether his hot head and throbbing heart could stand it all.

"Any day after Parliament meets, for the Impenitent Thief has no policy, and he can't take up either the Irish church, or the Irish land, and both will be pressed upon his notice as they have never been pressed before. We have the whole Liberal party on our side. I was speaking to Acton yesterday; you had been orating at his little supper; cynical Acton says that the hero of Clare has come to life again. Be it so, O'Brien. I shall want my secretary to

be in Parliament. Now prepare an oration upon the indignities of the peasant population of the West. Read it to me next week, and the week after you will deliver it in Bermondsey to an Irish audience. That will be as good practice as a denunciation of the Galport professoriate from the Galport market-place. Your borough will be a little one—Concannon on the Shannon; you will represent, perhaps, seventy householders. Now, to work with all your might. By the way, Mrs. Lynch has come to town. And I'm going to be retained against her. Can't say I think the other party has much chance, but it will be a romantic case, and I think there's some political capital to be made out of it. Eileen Lynch, the poor Irish girl, to be restored to her own, over a Saxon intruder—fine theme, O'Brien. I see my way to a great speech which will thrill Ireland. Curious, complicated case, and Ribbons tells me that it's Mrs. Lynch's brother who is running the business. Haven't seen to the bottom of it yet. Go now, and work at your oration for Bermondsey."

CHAPTER XII.

REACTION.

EILEEN CONRAN'S husband gave up visiting her and assigned no cause. .

For a week after the meeting with Gorton at Michael Conran's house, he never appeared, and his wife judged that she had bitterly and perhaps permanently offended him. Night after night she sat, far into the midnight, trimming her father's taper, and occasionally putting on her cloak to go down to the bridge and lean over, and remember there what her lover had said to her in his days of first love. .

On one of these occasions she had rubbed elbows with a man, who only spoke to give her the pass-word of No. XII. and to tell her she might go to bed in peace; "Michael" would not come "that night, nor the next, nor the next." She shrank back from the conspirator, and instead of feeling that there were watching eyes

upon her home and protecting arms, she only shuddered and dreamt of violent death to the beautiful young Apollo of the Barracks. She tried to see him once or twice, to way-lay him on his road to the club, to watch him even at a distance when his company was marching, but all her efforts failed. A whole, long, bitter week passed, and Gorton had come and gone twice, urging her to carry the flag to the Shannon, and she felt that her own will must break down before his more masterful disposition, if she were not helped by her husband's love.

Yet Jeffery came not. It was told her, also, that Conny Carmichael's father had been made king of the Claddagh, and that Conny would take her place at the bridge when her father was at sea, and decide the disputes of the people. Conny was Princess, and her own father in his absence was deposed, and her lot seemed very, very hard to her. No wonder that one early twilight before the nuns were filing into their chapel to vespers, she should seize the opportunity of an open door, and creep to the red and blue window, and stoop at the hem of the garments of the inanimate Virgin who looked across the pews. She knelt there and

her fingers deftly wrought at her beads as her lips moved in a passionate ecstasy of prayer, no prayer taught her in the routine of the Church, but words of anguish which came to her lips unsought and which found expression in a low wail.

“Mother of God,” she cried to the inanimate image, while the winter sunlight streamed through the heads of saints and the inscriptions of abbots, and the blue and crimson panes, “Mother of God, give me back his heart. Give me back his love. Turn him towards me again. Send him to me—kindle the fire of his love. And send no harm from me or mine—me or mine,” she wailed as the work of No. XII. rose before her, and she thought of how she was committed. She turned towards the altar, and for a moment, with the radiance of the coloured light in her eyes, she dreamed that there was an answer for her, straight from heaven, coming down the golden ladder of light, and she went down on her knees on the cold stone, and bent her ear for the sound.

“Mother of God, Mother of God,” she was wailing, having cast aside her cloak, and

opened her dress at her throat to give herself air.

“Ah, Eileen,” said a voice at her side, not a voice from the heavenly spheres at all, but Sister Maria’s, she having been to the chapel door to see that it was shut and locked.

The kneeling wife turned her streaming eyes on her with agony, her lips murmuring unconsciously, “Mother of God, give me back his heart.”

“It is an impious prayer, Eileen. You have sinned to come before this altar, approachable only to”—and Sister Maria lowered her voice—“virginity. You have sinned and intruded. Come away, before the prioress appears and finds the sacred stones soiled with your touch.”

“Sure then, you would not rob me of my peace of mind, and it was coming,” said Eileen, stretching out her arm painfully towards the light, and turning her tear-stained face to the figure in the niche. “No, no, the Mother of God will hear me, the Mother of God restore him to me again, give me back his heart—” and, leaning forward upon the floor, Eileen touched the cold stone with her brow, and her

hair, breaking loose, fell free at the feet of the speechless Madonna. Sister Maria had known and seen much agony in the chapel, but Eileen's impressed her as an agony which had no connection with religious sentiment as such, but which was the immediate outcome of a painful experience. The girl was asking something out of hand, from the Virgin, in accents which she had heard nothing to compare with. There was no doubt about her sincerity, no doubt about her anguish; to what, however, was she alluding? Not to Michael, her father, she would be bound. She knew no paroxysms that had been expended upon the absent pilot. But she had heard the gossip of the hamlet, and knew that Eileen had been said to receive someone in a soldier's cloak, at her home, who was not there on the business of the village. And now, as she looked down and saw as a physical fact that the girl promised to become a mother, she crossed herself, not once but a dozen times, and sternly exclaimed,

“Eileen Lynch—for you are your mother's daughter—rise and purify yourself and depart, or something may befall you where you lie.”

“Mother of God, give me back his heart,” was the sole response to the nun’s command. Father, mother, national cause, the opinion of the Nunnery, everything disappeared in the inward wrestle to receive for herself the aid of the Virgin in winning her husband’s love.

“Lost, lost,” said Sister Maria, still automatically crossing herself and looking down at the prostrate figure; then sternly bending towards her, she plucked her from the floor, and with her hand firmly gripping one shoulder she pushed her into the open aisle.

“Lost?” said Eileen, wildly, rubbing her eyes with the back of her hands, and liberating herself from Sister Maria’s grasp, “no, not lost. The Mother of God will give me back his heart.”

“You poor, ruined thing,” said Sister Maria, “do I not know? Do I not see with my own eyes that you have been betrayed? Cover yourself up, you shameful girl. This is no place for you.”

In her anguish Eileen had overlooked the unfastening at her throat. She put her hand on her bosom, and returning to the niche off the altar, wrapped herself in her cloak.

"It is a place for prayer," said Eileen, "and mine has been answered, I know. I feel it within me that what I ask I will get."

"You prayed a concupiscent prayer. It will not be answered," said Sister Maria, as if she was herself the Mother of God addressed by Eileen.

"I don't rightly know what that kind of prayer is; but, surely, the answer is not in your hands, Sister Maria! "

"You asked that *his* heart might be given back to you? Whose? Fool that you are! Is it not always so? They love for a little, destroy their victims, weary of them, and then throw them off. Eileen Lynch, no prayer is heard which the Church has not composed. How could you expect your ravings to ascend to heaven? "

Eileen was overcome with the force of the sister's theology.

"Oh, ignorant and presumptuous that I am, it may be so; but I wished that his heart might be given back to me. I don't know why it's astray. No, no, I do not indeed, and if ever you loved me, Sister Maria,——"

"Eileen," said the sister, "do not pollute

our sanctuary with that word. Here we do not know that such feelings exist."

Broken, exhausted, doubtful whether the Virgin had, after all, been listening to her, Eileen threw herself into a low pew, knelt, and with her hair hanging into the pew in front of her, prayed without utterance or visible movement of chest or lips. But it was still the same refrain—"Mother of God, give me back his heart! Mother of God, give me back his heart!"

She only started from her praying posture, when Sister Maria, leaning towards her, whispered, "Eileen, you will be a mother before you have been a wife, and the Claddagh, as it has done to others before, will rise up and drive you beyond its bounds. You are lost, ruined, betrayed. Oh! foolish virgin undone, to put faith in a man's promises. Go now. Conceal yourself in your house. I will call on you. Here you are in danger of God's own anger."

And Eileen, hurried along the aisles, felt herself pushed perforce from the chapel door, beyond the walls of the Nunnery into the open roadway. But, as the twilight faded from the

sky, she sank upon her knees, where she had been ejected, praying, "Mother of God, give me back his heart!"

* * * * *

If Eileen were in despair outside the Nunnery, Captain Jeffery was not happy inside the Barracks. That young gentleman had been wounded in his weakest part—his vanity. It would not be fair to the state of his feelings at this period of his life to say that his vanity was stronger than his passion for Eileen. He had often, previously, been titillated into temporary affection for soft smiling faces, shining heads of hair and heaving bosoms, but his whole nature had never given itself up before to love, and nothing but love, as it had done to this poor princess of the fishers, with her voluptuous simplicity, her reluctant attachment to himself, and the new value conferred upon the attachment by its remoteness from the criticism of the world. And in spite of the strange meeting with Gorton, he still continued to love her, but with a difference. He loved her with an uneasiness begotten of his fixed suspicion that in some way unknown to him she was in league with the hidden forces

of rebellion scattered through the West. Not that he cared for the potential rebels. He looked on them as a sort of game preserve which never came to much. Yet it became a formidable consideration for him to think that his wife, whom one day he must acknowledge as such before his brother-officers, was probably deep in this thing they called sedition, and against which they were nominally posted at Galport.

He would have tolerated a little bias towards rebellion, however; what he could not tolerate was that another man should apparently understand a relationship which it was denied himself to understand. Those flags! That Yankee! It made him sick and heavy to think it all out, and as long as he was of that way of feeling he dropped visiting the Claddagh.

"I think, sir," said his colonel to him one day, "that you would have served your own health and happiness better had you gone with your former regiment to the West Indies instead of exchanging into ours. Hang me, if I ever knew a fellow who seemed to be bending more under the burden of his own coffin than you are. What's the matter with you?"

The question was natural enough. The senior captain had taken down from the walls of his sitting-room all the gay fables in ink and oil which used to regale the eye, and had substituted sombre, church subjects which his sister had given him. Not that he really cared a straw about the church subjects, but he felt he disliked them less than the steeple-chases, the fox-hounds and the French boudoir scenes which had preceded them. Eileen too he took down from her place and peevishly turned her to the wall in a low corner, where Master Morris kicked his foot through the frame, in one of his morning orgies. Jeffery was more lenient to the youngster than he would have been some weeks before. The truth is, he was beginning to be disgusted with the part he was playing in the matter of the estates. He was virtually his sister's and his sister's son's greatest enemy; yet he was entertaining Morris in his mother's name. And now the whole business was out of his hands, for the firm of solicitors which had taken the thing up, saw their way to carrying out all details, without so much as a reference to the original finder of the evidence.

But Jeffery could not explain to his colonel

why he looked, much less felt, so abandoned and forlorn. He, indeed, wished that he had made no exchange of regiment, that he had not allowed himself to be carried away by excess of devotion to a pair of glancing eyes, that he had not been induced by the dredging discovery to dispute the rights of his sister's son—but the regrets were unavailing. They could be nothing but regrets now; the hard facts must work out their own destiny and termination in spite of him. So much for the principle that a Queen's officer is entitled to amuse himself without reference to any code of morality except the fear of discovery. So much for drifting selfishness, heedless admiration of forbidden charms, unoccupied idleness of leisure hours, and remoteness from the absorbing centres of life. But all the gloomy meditation ended in one way: Eileen was his wife; he must acknowledge her; if need be, he must fight her cause openly before the world; in the meantime, however, she must be taught to discard friendships which he did not approve, and he would try what judicious neglect would do in that way.

CHAPTER XIII.

AT CLARGES STREET.

Nothing could be more uneventful than Mrs. Lynch's life at Clarges Street.

Having only opened two floors of her house, she had not even the distractions of ordinary domestic responsibility to fill her mind. Yet her mind was full enough, and she was not allowed to be without anxieties. She had passed the climax, however, towards which for some years she had been tending.

The major's substitute had come at last; she had decided upon him; she had accepted him; she believed that in Finn O'Brien she had found not only the fresh ardour of youth but the lasting qualities of heart and brain which would carry him honourably to an honourable goal. She was not so much in love as to be blind to some of Finn's deficiencies; he was too imaginative, she told herself; he was not so

literal in his representations of the common facts of life as she would like. To him life seemed to be a perpetual melodrama crammed with incident of a most astounding variety.

"He never entered an omnibus without an adventure; a walk in the street supplied him with half-a-dozen exciting *rencontres*; he rose in the morning to surprises, and he had them all day long. She did not know whether she were blind to occurrences, or whether the prosaic friends she used to have about her were similarly 'blind, but she was very certain that by sea or land they experienced none of the things which overtook O'Brien any afternoon in half-an-hour's stroll from Bloomsbury.

Had she realized how deeply the lad was involved in the movement of the secret societies she would not have been so surprised. Not that she did not suspect him of latent association with proscripts. For she did. And she had accepted him, foreseeing that his career was to be a stormy Irish career, in which noisy public work would have to be done, in the face of the world for proscripts and others similarly situated. So far, too, she was ready to accompany him in it. She was ready to allow him

to dictate conditions for her three tenancies ; she was willing to listen to him haranguing the House, while she bent her ear at the "cage" and claimed him as her very own in her proud inmost heart of hearts.

For oh ! she loved him, she would cry to herself at her embroidery-frame, as she worked with her needle at a silken trifle of formless colours ; she loved him, and he would be all in all to her. Young god that he was ! Cradled in a hovel, expelled from his college, here he was in the world's great city, storming drawing-rooms, and carrying them by force of wit, courage, and the anticipation of greatness which awaited him as an agitator. To be sure, they were unfashionable, winter drawing-rooms, as yet, where she had heard of his successes ; but even when London filled up and the summer sun shone upon the dazzling thousands who wheeled through Hyde Park, he would be as successful as here. And if he were not ? What matter ? Would it affect the roundness of his limbs, the heartiness of his laugh, the bold, beautiful assurance of his loving eyes ? No, he would be the same to her, the man who loved her, whom she loved, who was to make

up for her widowhood—so much more enjoyable a state than she had supposed it would be—and for her disappointment in her son, with his vicious ways, and his dominant tendency to become an early tyrant.

With such thoughts fusing her difficulties, Mrs. Lynch found them easy to support. One by one she saw Finn strangling them like serpents and casting them behind him, while they took their path together in the round of life, made easy for them by the light and glamour of love.

* * * *

It was in the full flood of his joy of acceptance of him that she one evening invited him to visit her in her box at a play of Shakespeare's, in which a new actor was conquering fresh fields of meaning for the relationship of Hamlet to Ophelia.

Finn had found the theatre in London an amazing experience; for a few shillings he was able to separate himself from his own life and past, the life of the streets and the secretaryship and the present, and watch, first hand, the movement of kings and queens, princesses and aristocracies, with all the glit-

tering play of their individualities; and so susceptible was he to this or that leading character, that Mr. O'Gee would note changes from time to time in his demeanour, and say,

“ Ah, O'Brien, you've been seeing Higgins in ‘Norval,’ or Binks in ‘Claude Melnotte.’ I know you have. You are as susceptible as wax.”

To be beside Mts. Lynch, however, in a box for a whole evening, and to watch the play of ‘Hamlet’ with her, was a delight which far surpassed the solitary enjoyment of seeing Higgins or Binks by himself. And very magnificent was the appearance of the young Irishman, as he leaned out of the widow's box, and with opera-glass in hand swept the tiers on the opposite side of the theatre.

The new ‘Hamlet’ was a discovery, and as yet the public had not made up its mind about him, whether he were really a fixed star, or only a luminous ether, capable of being blown aside by the winds of criticism.

Finn did not like him; he had not enough of swagger; he was too eccentric in his ap-

pearance ; he recited too little and talked too much, and dealt with his 'Hamlet' as if he had been a next-door neighbour, with an ordinary, common interest in life and its concerns, instead of, as Finn pictured him, an explosive maniac, perpetually communing with the invisible world.

Mrs. Lynch and he got on to talking about Shakespeare, and Finn had an opportunity of saying,

"I believe Shakespeare to be a greatly overrated man. Take him on the question of character. What paltriness of aim and ambition ! Why, the fellow had no more ambition than Mr. Tootle—an acquaintance of my own who vends pills. When he came to London, he was, if we are not misinformed, perfectly content to hold the heads of horses at the theatre doors. When he left London it was to go home again with his ambition hardly a grade higher, to invest money in Stratford. What did he ever do for the suffering or the oppressed of his period ? As little as he did for himself. Do you know, Beatrice, I find that 'Hamlet' a little undignified and common. I have seen an Irish

performer in a tent, with a finer capacity for squaring his shoulders, and putting out his legs in front of him."

But it was not for long that Finn found the play wearisome. He was explaining to Beatrice how, if Shakespeare had really been a great and able man, he must, of necessity, have pushed himself to the front like his contemporary, Lord Bacon, and in fact there was little doubt that Shakespeare had no opportunities for understanding human nature in its higher ranges. Finn believed that his dukes and kings and such like were probably pot-house companions, who scribbled in the same period with himself, and he declined for his part to accept them as representations of England's highest.

Mrs. Lynch was only amused at the view enunciated by Finn; she was not profoundly versed either in Shakespeare or his period, and the sound of the lad's voice, which waxed and grew till an overwhelming noise of "Hush," "Silence," "Hold your tongue," put an end to the little haranguing, was exceedingly pleasant to her. She discovered in his talk that flowing ease which assured her judgment

that one day he would occupy a great position as a statesman.

"Finn," said the widow suddenly, when the interrupted harangue was done, "how pale you are! Who is the—the man with the opera-glass you have been bowing to? I seem to have seen him, and yet I can't recall who he is."

The person in question was sitting in the stalls, and as he stood up during an *entr'acte*, he presented a straight, military-looking figure to the audience behind him, and a cool saturnine face, which Mrs. Lynch might be excused for not remembering as the miller of the Loughan stream.

"It's General Gorton. I can't think what has brought him here. See, he is moving out of the stalls; and I must go and speak to him."

"He is a striking figure. But why 'general?' I heard an Irish girl call him so before. I suspect there is a legend behind him. Bring him here if you like. I know him a little."

Finn went out and found Gorton wandering among the lobbies.

"Now I don't want to miss a line of the

piece," he said abruptly to Finn. "I only want to say to you that you must hold yourself in readiness for action any time. The organisation is about complete. The train is laid. You are still, I presume, of the same mind as when I enrolled you on my staff. You consider our claims the first upon you—before O'Gee's claims—before *hers*."

"Hush," said Finn, holding up a finger as a box-keeper approached.

"Hush it is," said Gorton loudly, and with the imperiousness of aspect which he had occasionally assumed in Finn's presence. "Hush it is, as when you expounded Shakespeare at your box-window for us poor, benighted ones in the stalls. I hope the poor fellow will recover in the course of time from the damaging assault you made on him. Now, O'Brien, there is no mistake—we understand each other as of old."

"As of old," said Finn, regarding uneasily the glittering eyes of the conspirator.

"Then go back to your dalliance. But remember *that* is not the part you have to play. It is but an incident—there are other things in store for you."

Finn went back to the widow's box, and sat silent and speechless the whole evening afterwards.

Gorton never looked at him again, but seemed to have his whole mind concentrated upon the new 'Hamlet.'

The applause of the house rose and fell as the play went on to a climax, and there was such wide-spread speechlessness of attention in the intervals that Mrs. Lynch thought Finn had been compelled into admiration in spite of his attack upon Shakespeare and his disapproval of the actor.

He was in reality wholly engrossed with Gorton, whose metamorphosis from a Western miller to a cosmopolitan American gentleman surprised and bewildered him. Yet, as he looked at him, he could not but feel, "This man can lead. I have no fear of anything he undertakes being a failure. There is command in him and success, too. I am proud to be a member of his staff, and Beatrice will be proud of it, too, one day."

Gorton, however, did not speak to him again, and next day he had gone back to Ireland.

The evening after, Mrs. Lynch put a carriage

at the disposal of Mr. and Mrs. O'Gee, and Finn and herself accompanied them to a meeting of the London Irish in Bermondsey.

It was not a great meeting, though O'Gee said it was; but it tested Finn's mettle. Mrs. Lynch looked a little dismayed as Finn handed her out at the glowing, lighted pavement of a public-house, and a little more dismayed when he conducted her through a pitchy yard and up a flight of wooden steps which led into a granary. Mrs. O'Gee and she were the only ladies present; and they were abundantly cheered as they took their seats on the raised platform.

The hall was a big, low chamber, scantily lit with flickering candles, and as row upon row of upturned faces poured out their cheers, Mrs. Lynch thought herself back in the West again. They were the same people, maintaining the same grievances, feeling themselves to be "exiles," resenting the feeling, and prepared to follow any orator who pointed the way to deliverance.

O'Gee was eloquent in a very high degree, and gave them rhetorical assurance that the new parliament which was coming would not

only disestablish the church and liberate the land—it would see the advent of a new Irish party, made up of all Irish groups, bent upon securing, by constitutional means, Ireland for the Irish.

It was at that point that Finn took up the tale. He was introduced amid solemn silence, by the chairman, as one who, though young, had had the honour of suffering a rude and dangerous exile from his native land, as one who, though young, had a heart glowing with the purified fires of patriotism, as one who, though young, would yet live to see a day dawn for Ireland in which the chains would be struck off the slaves, and those who were down would be up, and those who were up would be down. “Stand out, O’Brien,” said the chairman, “and tell the exiles of Bermondsey of the good time coming.”

O’Gee had carefully recast the speech originally submitted to him by Finn so that nothing actually seditious should be spoken from his platform, but Finn at an early stage of the proceedings threw away his notes, and in his favourite attitude of his left arm behind his coat-tails, and his right arm plunging, he

expounded to a breathless audience a scheme of sedition closely copied from Gorton's map, and only differing from it insomuch as it applied to the east and north of Ireland instead of to the west and south.

The day was coming, he told them, and would be soon—soon and sudden—when the Irish air would be darkened with the disjected trunks and limbs of an exploded soldiery, constabulary, magistracy and clergy, when the sun of England would set in blood and fire. His prophetic soul saw Ireland marching to England's catastrophe! He saw the landlords running helter-skelter for their lives. He saw the busy Irish bees hurrying from their honeyed hives, stinging them in the rear. He saw the bees return again to their hives, and flowers, honey and all became their possession for ever after. So help him God! God save Ireland!

The effect of his speech was much greater than O'Gee's. The audience rose to its feet, and roared. Some of them caught each other in their arms and swayed, hugging. A general movement of extended palms was made towards the platform, and Finn had to lean over and

present his arm to be wrung till it promised to come out of its socket.

O'Gee was calm and not displeased. Mrs. O'Gee turned to Mrs. Lynch, and seizing her left elbow with her right hand, clutched it, so that finger marks remained there for weeks afterwards. Mrs. Lynch was so gratified that she involuntarily bowed to the audience, as if she were Finn's husband; and the audience, seeing the movement, cheered with renewed significance.

When the widow bade Finn good-night at her door, she no longer doubted that he was to be a statesman of the first calibre and the highest position.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONNECTING IT WITH THE PAST.

GENERAL GORTON, on his return to Galport, made haste to revisit Eileen: He knew nothing of her father, and shrewdly suspected that he had got himself drowned; however, the approaching rebellion required of him that the fiction should be kept up, so it was with the appearance of having very good news to tell her that he approached Eileen's house the afternoon after his return from London.

"Safe, safe, Eileen Conran. Your father will be with you in good time. I have had news of him. He is well and alive, and doing our work for us in great style."

"Did he send no little token?" asked Eileen, wearily, and not responding to the announcement of her father's safety with the enthusiasm which might have been expected.

"No token," said Gorton, "but, Eileen, in

a few minutes Father O'Clery of Loughan will be here. We have got a token delivered to us at St. Columbkille, ploughed up for us by one of No. XII. on his own wheat field. An old bell, Eileen Conran, buried there for heaven only knows how many centuries, and the extraordinary thing is that it is in some way connected with your destiny, for Father O'Clery once picked up a manuscript of Finn O'Brien's at Mrs. O'Brien's shebeen, and read about such a bell, on just such a place, and O'Brien told him, on inquiry, that he had been amusing himself in his college library by translating the story of the bell from an old manuscript. Think of that. It makes my American blood tingle. Here is a lad in a library translates a manuscript relating to a bell, which has lain hundreds and hundreds of years in a man's back-garden, and the century old bell gets dug up and is found to have a voice which commands the whole bay of Galport. Sound it at St. Columbkille and they hear it at the islands. Why, Eileen Conran, do you not see the meaning of this? Father O'Clery himself has admitted that it is a message from the Most High. Eileen, when the bell rings,

our work begins for Ireland. You understand me? Father O'Clery is coming to bless the bell where it stands, and it will be hoisted in the moonlight, and our troops will be there and they will see, and hear, and that will be the beginning of the great brave days."

"A bell," said Eileen sorrowfully, "at Columbkille can have nothing to do with me, General Gorton."

"Ah, Eileen, you are falling off from the old love that your people's sufferings and your brave father's example have taught you. I was in London, Eileen, the other day, and was sitting at a play when I became aware, quite suddenly, that one of my own lieutenants—you know him—Finu O'Brien—was sitting with Mrs. Lynch, pouring out his heart to her and expending on her the love he owes to the cause. For you can't have love for a woman or a man, Eileen, and have it also for the cause, for love is the life and the rest is mere pretence, and it is not pretence but love and life we want, to plant our blow on the great day, so that there shall be enduring results. And I find that like O'Brien, very like O'Brien, you have inconveniently set your heart on a Saxon."

Eileen had not again seen her husband since the evening of the scene, but, as usually happened with her, Gorton's words roused her to a sense of mysterious connection with myriads of people outside himself, and to the dignity of her own personality as one who was to stand forth, with light on the national banners, as a great deliverer of her people.

"If you can't assume the honours of the Shannon visit, Eileen, you can at least come to St. Columbkille with the priest. Ah, here he is. Father, we are just setting out. A fair wind helps us across. King Conran's daughter represents the Claddagh at the little ceremony."

As they crossed the bay, Father O'Clery poured out his aspirations for Ireland in strains which revealed to Eileen that, if he did not know the details of the secret societies, he gave the movement a prayerful sympathy. "The bell, he said, "is not restored to church or abbey. It is hung for the time being on a mountain ash, and you tell me, Mr. Gorton, there is cause, from beyond the stars, for its position there. Well, well, I will bless it where it hangs on the ash-tree, and if it

rings in a new period for us, it will speak from some abbey tower with all the more potency afterwards."

"Father, you will be rewarded," said Gorton, as their boat swept, in the cool moonlight, into the bay of St. Columbkille. They stopped where Gorton and Eileen had once landed before, and after skirting the beach for a mile ascended the mountain side and came out upon a grassy plateau. On the way up, they passed scout after scout, who in reply to Gorton's signal gave the same pass-word in response. Then they entered a thicket of trees, one of which, much taller than its neighbour, had a bell hung among its branches. As the wind rustled among the leaves the tongue touched the sides of the bell, and a tremulous, silvery vibration struck the frosty air.

"Heavens," said Father O'Clery, "it is a consecrated church bell of the most exquisite tone. On whose ears may it not have struck, when Mochuda was on the mountains! But what—what, Mr. Gorton, is this? An army—an army with banners, clustered like bees around the wood, and their arms glittering in the moonlight."

It was true. Company after company of tall farmers, armed and equipped with burnished steel, and belts enclosing their waists, marched in orderly array to the edge of the wood.

There could not be fewer than five hundred of them, and every man by his erect gait and firm step proved himself to be a soldier.

"Father O'Clery, I want you to see a little of our reserve power. You need not inquire what it is for. Suffice it that the power is there and can come when it is summoned," said Gorton to the priest who, with his hat at his breast, was scanning the silent, tramping mass with the strongest emotion.

"They might save their country, any night," said the priest in a whisper, looking over the regiments of the invisible army, with a throbbing heart.

"Put them outside Galport barracks to-night, and not an Englishman could escape alive, if I gave the word of extermination. And now," said Gorton, raising his voice so that it covered the living field, "come out, Captain Torry, and tell Father O'Clery how you found the bell."

Captain Torry was the seven-foot farmer of St. Columbkille, who represented No. XII. in

that community. He stepped from the head of his company, and holding out his hand to the priest and to Eileen in turn, he said,

“Proud I am, sor, to see the Charch here this noight. The bill spoke at the ind of me share when I was crossing from the high to the low of me third field from me house. It spoke like something alive, and at first I got a start and thought I had better lave it alone and inquire no further. Then I thought, sure it’s may-be a crock o’ goold, and I’m a rich man for iver and iver. So I went over the ground again, and dug and dug till I uncovered that beautiful crayture on the tree. There’s a ladder in the ditch waiting for ye, Father O’Clery.”

A ladder was brought, and the priest, amid the profoundest silence, ascended to where the bell was occasionally sending out a sound. His figure was only half visible to the multitude, but shortly his sonorous voice ascended in a Latin invocation or benediction, and all heads were uncovered. Nothing but the roll of the Latin was audible for some time; then he seemed to those round about to be engaged in the mystery of an anointment, though they could not accurately see. Whatever it was,

it exercised a subduing influence upon them, for, at a sign from Gorton, everybody knelt. The whole ceremony did not occupy more than ten minutes; when the priest descended he held in his hand a cord connected with the tongue of the bell. Gorton then started to his feet and standing out before the kneeling companies, exclaimed,

“Hearken, all of you. From this night till you are called together for action on the great night of Ireland’s liberation this bell will not toll. To-night it has been blessed and anointed and set apart for the use of the cause; and to-night you will be allowed to hear its sound over the sea.

“Take away the voice with you; take it away in your hearts, and remember that it is Old, Old Ireland which is speaking, and that the voice of the true Ireland does not deceive. You will be called to the field of blood when next you hear it; I ring it now that you may know the call to arms along these coasts, for the night may be darker and bonfires may not pierce the mists; but the tongue of the recovered bell can never deceive you.”

Gorton approached the cord and pulled; a

penetrating tinkle was followed by a series of voluminous, rich sounds, which rolled down-hill and floated over the bay and were heard far-off in many a remote hamlet of the opposite shores—heard and wondered at as something celestial occurring under the moonlight.

“ You won’t confound it, boys, with the Protestant Cathedral bell, will you now ? ” called out Father O’Clery, as Gorton, released from his tintinnabulation, began to ascend with a cowl to cover the bell.

Shouts of laughter greeted the remark, and the father was assured from a score of quarters that an evil day was coming for the Protestant ‘Cathaydral’ bell of Galport.

The evolutions which succeeded the ringing were few and came to an abrupt though orderly conclusion, owing to the arrival of scouts with information that the gun-boat was coming round towards St. Columbkil, and the coast-guard boats were out.

CHAPTER XV.

PERMEATION.

THE winter in London was sufficiently exciting for Finn and Mrs. Lynch.

Father Hugh had been taken into the latter's confidence and told that she intended to marry the lad, 'when he had settled down to the work Mr. O'Gee set out for him. The priest, who became very popular, and was employed in bringing out a volume concerning the concealed and apparent treasures in the West, did not take to the idea with much enthusiasm. He gave Mrs. Lynch a veritable history of Finn and his mother and father, and urged that the career of agitation he had entered upon was nothing but sound and fury, signifying mischief to his country and certain ruin to himself. It was ever so, he told the widow, with the brilliant youth of Ireland who embarked upon it. They began with perfect

sincerity and in obedience to an irresistible impulse inherited from many hundreds of generations of down-trodden ancestors. It was as natural for a young Irishman, with the power of expression, he said, to be an agitator in his youth, as it was for him to weep for the moon at an earlier stage of his existence. But, instead of being encouraged to agitate, he should be weaned from the task and put upon the ordinary routine of life which, if it furnished none of the rewards of publicity, gave the contentment of plain lives plainly led.

"Alas, Father Hugh," the widow would say to him, "I fear he has gone too far and is too deeply committed to the movement to turn back. And Mr. O'Gee has promised him a borough, and what more sobering influence could you have than that? I shall quite like to be married to the member for Concannon."

To which Father Hugh had nothing to say, except a word of renewed warning that agitation was a wave which had wrecked many a bark; let her take care of the boy in whose frail craft she was about to entrust her life and fortunes.

"Well, I prefer shipwreck with him," she

would say, "to safety with another less devoted to me."

Notwithstanding the softening effect of a mutual affection, it was an exciting winter.

O'Gee knew for a fact, he protested, that there would not be another session of the same parliament; the Impenitent Thief would have to go to the country, and the country would send in a parliament with a thundering majority for his opponent. What Gorton considered would be the Nationalist chance, O'Gee believed, to be the chance of the constitutional agitation. He would cram the south and west of Ireland with his followers. The new premier would be compelled to bend all his attention to his party's grievances; the parliament on College Green would be brought within reasonable distance. And, while he aired these views he managed by skilful cross-questioning to elicit from Finn the fact that something of an explosive nature was preparing which, about the time of the election, would be heard as it had never been heard before. In the meantime, Finn having spoken once at Bermondsey was called to speak to his London countrymen at Islington, in various seedy

portions of the East End, and it was intended, by and 'bye, to send him down to the manufacturing centres to twang the harp of Erin for the benefit of discontented countrymen who were employed at three times the wages they had been used to earn in their own homes. But being an agitator would not have excited the lad so much. He took to it as naturally as if he had been born spouting. The difficulty for him was to combine the platform work with the diplomacy towards No. XII. which kept a knife out of his back, or a bullet out of his jaw.

He went in constant dread of his life, notwithstanding the assurance Gorton had given him, for having been told off to blow in a prison wall on the other side of which a distinguished Fenian was languishing, he had declined the task, though he was told by the little traveller that he had been balloted to perform that service for his country. The wall was blown down later on, without him, which only made him the more uncomfortable; for a few nights after it occurred he was aware that two detectives closely followed him, and that he went nowhere where they did not go.

O'Gee, too, grew rather irritable with him, when he defended the explosion, pointing out that the shedding of blood in the open streets of London alienated all English sympathy from their cause, and that if an election came suddenly upon them, it might cost them a dozen seats. "Besides," as the patriot said, "at my time of life I prefer to get along with some degree of social comfort, so long as I am living in London. And this cursed explosion will make every dinner-table a scene of irritation and indigestion for months to come."

Yet the patriot could not afford to be done with the man who was in known correspondence with the authors of the act. It occurred to him, however, to tell O'Brien that if he were going to marry Mrs. Lynch for her money and estates, he might save himself the pains; for the case for Eileen Lynch, or Conran, was arranging itself so strongly in her favour that he had little doubt of the result. He said it to annoy Finn, being displeased with the explosion; but Finn was very far from being deterred by it. It did not diminish his enthusiasm for Mrs. Lynch in the least. And

the next time he saw her he opened the subject by saying,

“Beatrice, O’Gee says that your estates are likely to be alienated.”

“Does it make much difference to you, Finn?” asked the widow, looking seriously at him.

“Some.”

“As how?”

“It makes the difference, that I shall have the satisfaction of making you my wife without estates. And that is best. Love is enough.”

“Poor boy, you are a statesman, and that is all you know of life. No, Finn, if my estates are alienated, I shall not marry. Not at all. I will not add my burdens to yours if I cannot assist you in your career. But O’Gee naturally thinks, because he is retained for the other side, that he is sure to win. My own lawyers tell me that there are circumstances in connection with the transfer of the estates to Major Lynch which make it impossible for the Church to allow the claimant to go on. I have Father Hugh’s advice to go on as if nothing were occurring, and, as you know, he has submitted

the question to a great Catholic dignitary who has advised in the same direction."

"In that case, Beatrice, we will get married, if you please, as soon as you like. Why delay? What is to be gained by it?"

"Wait, dear, for Concannon. Win a constituency and a wife at the same time. The last will help you to keep the first, and *vice versa*, perhaps, for I am full of worldly wisdom."

And it was on that understanding that they got through the winter, until early spring brought members of parliament back to town, with the prospect of an exciting fight.

With the opening of parliament, however, the last session as it proved of the government controlled by the statesman familiarly known to O'Gee and his friends as "the Impenitent Thief," this history "has nothing to do. It opened up a new world to Finn, to which, however, with characteristic readiness, he soon adapted himself. At first he felt a certain degree of nervousness as he saw the figures of statesmen whom from his earliest boyhood he had been taught to curse moving about the great yard and lobbies of Westminster. He was a little disappointed, just at first, that they

were not giants, for it was in the guise of giants they had always risen before his imagination, when he had heard and read of them suddenly opening prison gates and thrusting into them patriots who were giving expression to their views about England's tyranny. Instead of being giants, however, he found that they were only gentlemen who talked over a table at each other in commonplace voices, suppressing yawns when they were discussing the destiny of hundreds of thousands of their fellow-creatures, and openly snoozing beneath their hats when their speeches were delivered. He could not believe his eyes, the morning after the first debate he heard, when he unfolded the newspapers and read the majestic periods and withering sarcasms which the evening before had been laconically dropped from the mouths of Government and Opposition. Mr. O'Gee alone among speakers seemed to him to have the earnestness, passion and power of utterance which became the place. The result of his first observations at Westminster was that he soon found his way out and in the lobbies, the library, the smoking-room, and the terrace of the House of Commons. Being obliged to be

much at the elbow of O'Gee, he speedily became known to O'Gee's small following, and popularity followed upon knowledge of him, because of the large frankness of his nature, which, the first awe of the legislative assembly and its surroundings being removed, impelled him to many bold asides, calculated to awaken laughter even among the serious. It began to be taken for granted that this O'Brien, who hung about till midnight, now in the library, now in the lobby, and who entertained groups of Irish lobbyists while O'Gee was otherwise engaged, would go inside the House in due course. And though Finn's experiences in London, especially 'in connection with the glories of the "Row," which opened upon him as Aladdin's enchanted palace rose to the rubbing of the lamp, were not without interest, it is necessary to overlook them, and to hasten to the autumn of the year which brought a dissolution.

CHAPTER XVI.

BACK TO THE CLADDAGH.

THE time had arrived when Eileen Conran was to become a mother. She had concealed her condition until the event of the child's arrival put concealment out of the question. It was with dread and misgiving that she looked forward to becoming a mother, for Jeffery, though he had overcome his indignation so far as to visit the Claddagh, communicated with her chiefly through Larry O'Shec. That intermediary, being more in Gorton's pay than in his master's, lost no opportunity of explaining to him the attachment which existed between Eileen and the captain at the Barracks. But Gorton, though he resented the fact, had no apparent means of circumventing it, so he let it alone.

Eileen had taken no one into her confidence about her marriage and its forthcoming results.

She shrank from communicating to anyone that she had married a Saxon, that he lived at the Barracks, and was one of the instruments of Ireland's subjection; and that she was to join him among his brother Saxons in the course of time. And the truth was that her own desire to join him at the Barracks was accompanied by a strong repulsion at the prospect of having to lead the life of an English officer's wife. Having given up one regiment to join another for her sake, Eileen hoped to make him give up that other and go away across the seas with her, out of it all. 'It was the brightest part of her motherhood to her that she felt she might now claim for another what it would have been selfish to claim for herself; yet she dreaded the birth for other reasons. What would the Claddagh say? Her neighbours were rough people, and they would not believe her if she said she were married.' And she knew what they had done once before, in the case of Biddy Casey, who was a mother without being a wife. They took Biddy Casey, infant and all, and put her into a coracle and let her find her way as she best might to the opposite shores of the bay. And Biddy and her child had died of exposure,

because of the affront she had brought upon the community. To be sure, when Biddy's people came back from the English harvest-field they did away with her betrayer, but that did not lessen the solicitude in her own case. Sister Maria had been much out and in the cottage of late. Eileen had almost entrusted her secret to her ; but she always shrank from it at the last moment, not knowing what new danger she might expose herself to.

Sister Maria was in the cottage, however, when the child was born, and for many hours she attended upon Eileen with the most affectionate care.

It was a little dark-eyed boy who made his appearance, and the nun could not have shown more rapturous affection towards him if she had been the mother of him.

She believed that Eileen was not a married woman ; but all her sternness of demeanour relaxed at the sight of the infant. She spread him out at the feeble mother's elbow. She asked her to admire him. She took down the lighted candle from the window, lit for Michael's hooker which never came, and shut the wind out of the casement by pinning a sheet on the

inner side of it. She went from the inner to the outer door, time after time, to intercept neighbours, telling them gentle untruths about Eileen's condition, 'and bidding them not return again for a day or two. One old crone, however, who lifted the latch lightly, came in and approached the inner room while Sister Maria was occupied with the baby-boy with her back turned. The crone, Conny Carmichael, the new princess's aunt, had her own suspicions of what was about to take place. Here was the baby-boy, visible to the eye, and no doubt about him. And nobody in attendance but Sister Maria. The discovery was almost too much for her equanimity; she had nearly revealed her presence by a cry of outraged astonishment, when she prudently held her breath and withdrew.

From Eileen's cottage to King Carmichael's was some little distance, nearly the whole length of the Claddagh; but crone Carmichael did not let the grass grow under her feet as she conveyed the news. The king, not long home from a fishing expedition, was at the tavern with his crew. Conny was sitting with half-a-dozen friendly crones, who were

discussing the varieties of fish brought ashore.

“Wurrah!” burst in the aunt, “but the Claddagh’s disgraced ’intirely. Oh, the evil day for Michael Conran far away! I was roight, I was roight. We was all roight. It is thrue ivery word of it. She’s blacker nor tar she is. Her mother’s own daughter—and a son brought into the Claddagh this noight—a great impudent spalpeen ov a bhoy, or me eyes deccived me intirely. Wurrah! but it’s the evil noight for Michael Conran far off!”

The crones, who were squatting by the turf fire while Conny ironed a print at a side-table, laid aside their pipes and looked at the new-comer.

“Sure, then, a son without a father, it is ye say, and the white nuns all over the way, prayin’?”

“A son widout a father. With me own eyes I saw him, and Eileen Conran—no, she’s no Conran—she’s a Lynch as ever was on the shore—lyin’ there, smiling on it, and not so much as a tear of shame on her face.”

The crones all stood to their feet, puffing peremptorily; Conny Carmichael laid down her

iron, and with open mouth stared upon her aunt, finally bursting into, "Oh, shame the day!"

"Yes, and *she* would stand up at the bridge, and the men was all mad about her, and what Eileen said was law and gospel, and what we said was nothing, and now that shame has taken her there will be those that will difind her in her throuble and say, if she did it, she had a roight to do it."

"Thrue for you, then, and what would you propose? A coracle for her and the new-born babe?"

"No, no," cried Conny. "It's no coracle there will be for Michael's daughter. It's a slip, and she'll be well punished for it. But there's to be no exposure on the sea."

"Michael would have knifed her, so he would," replied the aunt, blazing with virtue.

"And it's some knifing there will be anyhow. Who done it? She always had a kind eye for Thaddy Murphy. Is it Thaddy, think ye?"

"Well thin, it has eyes as like Thaddy's as can be. It wouldn't surprise me if it was."

"There was a soldier used to call for her,

bad luck to the blaggard, about the fish from the Claddagh."

"He was blue-eyed and innocent," said the aunt.

"Thin I'll just run over to Thaddy Murphy, and tell him to get his boat and his gear and sail away, or run as fast as his legs can carry him to the mountains or into the country; for it's a knifing he'll get if the bhoys think he's presumed."

"Now, what if Eileen Lynch be married?" asked Conny. "There was onst that I went into her house on a suddint, and she was standin' with a bright goold ring on one finger, and a harp o' goold at her throat. Think of that!"

"There has been no marridge," said the vindictive Aunt Carmichael—who was one who thought that the Conrans had ruled the Claddagh too long—"and I'll submit the birth to your father, this night, Conny, and he can do what he thinks roight."

"You'll do nothing of the sort, then, aunt, for he's full of the bottle this night and won't come home with any judgment in him. It's over and see Eileen I will, for I believe there's

no harm in the infant at all, if we knew everything."

"We'll all go tagidder, thin."

And to Eileen's cottage the crones went, discussing the birth in so high a key, and with such singular ejaculations that they roused the village.

"What do ye suspect?" asked the leading store-keeper, with his scoop in his hand, knowing of old, from the cries of the women, that an uninvited infant had arrived. And before the answer could be made, Thaddy Murphy rushed up the street, pursued by half-a-dozen young fellows his own age, to whom the news had just been communicated. He bore the marks of very rough usage. There was blood on his face, and his coat was torn to rags. But the crones went on their way as if they saw nothing; it would have been a dangerous thing for them to interfere with the breaking of heads on such an occasion.

When they arrived at the outside of the Nunnery they set up a united wail which, reaching the ears of Eileen, as she lay looking at her boy, made her start and press the child to her breast.

“Sister Maria. It’s married I am—and have been for nearly a year. But don’t ask me to whom! And it’s the mothers outside thinking me a disgrace to the Claddagh, and they may part me from the boy and expose him on the sea. Bar the door on them, sister. I will up and away, for they will not wait to listen.”

Sister Maria barred the door, came back, and found that Eileen had risen from her bed, and that a trap-door was yawning where she had not seen one before.

“I am weak and feeble, Sister Maria, but if you will carry him below we will be safe.”

“Poor Eileen, it will kill you both, I am afraid. Where does this lead to?”

“Hold the light for me, sister, and I will go under; follow me, and let down the trap.”

Warily, Eileen descended, her senses reeling, and the nun followed, bearing the infant and a lamp. The mother clutched the ladder at the foot, and seemed as if she would fall, when the nun, looking round her, and seeing an armoury of weapons, gave a cry of astonishment which brought back Eileen’s senses.

“Eileen, Eileen, what is this place you

have brought me to? Arms and barrels. There is something behind this, something dreadful that I should not know."

"Over the stones you go, sister. You nor I have nothing to do with other people's secrets. Oh, let me lean on you, or I will fall and die."

"You must not die here." I will go up again. Better to face the angry neighbours than remain in this uncanny place."

But Eileen tottered towards the opening in the boulders, through which the sound of the sea was moaning, and beckoning the nun, she turned aside into a rocky passage, where the dank water was dripping audibly. Holding the lamp high over her head, and screening the child with her cloak from the dripping water of the cavern, Sister Maria followed the tottering footsteps of the girl until they had lost the sound of the sea and gained the dry earthen silence of a well built passage. "Poor Eileen!" she murmured, as the girl, once and again on the verge of losing consciousness, leant against the passage. "Poor Eileen, you know, I hope, where you are leading us."

"A little farther and we are beneath the

Nunnery walls, a little farther and we can come out beneath the Nunnery chapel." But the struggle was too much for the young mother ; she fell forward on her face and lay so motionless that Sister Maria judged her to be dead. With her lamp in one hand, and the babe on the other arm, she could not stoop to assist her ; she followed the windings of the passage until it brought her to a stand-still in front of a stanchioned door. It seemed to have no hinge or lock ; it presented nothing to the light but a flat, impassive surface, overhung with fungus ; if it led to the chapel, then, she thought she must remain barred out. Laying the lamp on a projecting stone, she searched from roof to floor, rubbed the fungus off from the edge, and was rewarded by uncovering a spring, which she pressed with triumphant result. The door sprang towards her and the draught blew out her light. But she was in the crypt of the chapel, and she heard her sisters overhead at their evening prayers. She bounded up the narrow steps of the crypt and came out into the light bearing the infant in her arms.

The solemn evening hymn came to an

abrupt conclusion, and a crowd of curious sisters grouped themselves about her at the altar.

“ Sister Maria, is this a miracle ? ” asked the Lady Superior, as she made a way for herself through the charmed circle of gazers.

“ A new born babe ! ”

“ How sweet ! ”

“ It sleeps.”

“ What eye-lashes ! ”

“ Oh, Sister Maria, how did you come by it ? ”

Such were the exclamations of some of the nuns, whose suppressed motherhood seemed to find satisfaction in gazing upon the sleeping object in Sister Maria’s arms.

“ There is no time for questions—listen ! You hear the cry of the Claddagh outside. They are hunting Eileen Conran, and she is a married woman, and this is her babe, and she lies beyond the crypt, dead for aught I know. Follow me, some of you.” And irreverently snatching a couple of candles from the altar, the Lady Superior having taken over the infant, she descended into the crypt and made her way back to where Eileen lay.

The girl had not moved or returned to consciousness; she was white as a lily, and so cold when four of the sisterhood stooped to carry her that they thought she was indeed dead.

She was not dead, however, for in half-an-hour's time she was breathing freely in the Lady Superior's room, and stretching out her hand for her boy, while a priest bent over her, prepared to administer the last rites, Sister Maria standing in the back-ground, with anxiety stamped in every feature.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DISCOVERY.

SISTER MARIA took counsel of nobody, but next day, in visiting the city, she stopped at the magistrate's door and asked an interview of him. He was at luncheon when she entered, and he gallantly offered her a seat at his meal, which she declined; she would sit at the window, she said, until he was quite done; then she would tell him the object of her visit.

"You will find much to amuse you out there," said the magistrate. "That miraculous American, Mr. Gorton, has made the river a scene of beautiful industry. The amount he distributes in wages every week is doing a great deal to diminish the crimes that attend the poverty in this district."

"Is he the tall man in the light suit, smoking on the quays just now?"

"The same," said the magistrate, rising

from the table and looking over the nun's shoulder. "A soldierly looking fellow. A little loud in his style, perhaps, but I, at least, am thankful for him. . He is doing heaps of good. And now, madam, what is the business?"

"I have made a most unpleasant discovery. I fear there is some plot."

"More sedition. A new rising, eh? We have our eyes on them."

"I am sure you do not know of this. It is a terrible accumulation of deadly weapons—pikys, guns, knives, gunpowder—hid in a subterranean chamber. We may be blown into space any day."

"You have not told your discovery to anybody?"

"No."

"Not even to the visiting fathers of the Nunnery?"

"To none of them."

"And now I will take down your statement myself, and promise you that your name shall be kept out of it. Just tell me about it—how you came to discover it, and what you think it is."

“There is very little need of a statement. You may come and see for yourself. To-night I will conduct you to the place and with your own eyes you may judge what the danger is.”

“What the danger is—where there is so much secreted, there is sure to be a force of assassins told off to watch it. Have you no fear of being assaulted?”

“I have more fear of being blown into space.”

“Then the accumulation is in the neighbourhood of the Nunnery.”

“I will lead you to it from the crypt of the chapel.”

“Extraordinary! What can have made them store gunpowder there? They can have no quarrel with the sisterhood. Think it a safe place, with no fear of detection, probably.”

“Probably. Then you will meet me to-night at the west entrance of the Nunnery, and I will show you what I have discovered.”

The magistrate, not without some private qualms, went over to the Nunnery in the dusk, and met Sister Maria, as he had arranged.

Inside the walls he felt quite safe, and when he was conducted to the chapel, he began to

think he might be made the victim of some ocular delusion on the part of the sister. That feeling presently subsided, when she led him, lamp in hand, through the doorway, and after many circuitous windings brought him within sound of the moaning of the sea, to the well crammed cave beneath Conran's house.

"By Jove!" exclaimed the magistrate, "there's a movement behind this. Gently, let me have the light. Why, this is an old ecclesiastical chamber—they have chosen their ground well. They must bring the stuff in from the sea. You keep by the opening which leads to the Nunnery. There may be some of them about, and if I tumble you can run. Gracious heavens! There is ammunition for an army here—positively for an army. Ah, the scoundrels, they all bear the American mark—no, here are some cases from Birmingham—and—and,—'hey, the dusty miller, with the dusty coat'—I smell a rat. Some of these boxes have been consigned to the mill, or I am very much mistaken. Well, well. We must take possession this very night. There's no time to be lost."

Mr. Butler took an accurate note of the

contents of the place, and followed Sister Maria back to the chapel.

“You may congratulate yourself, madam, on having been the means of saving the expenditure of a great deal of blood. We are on the eve of something redder than has visited these shores within your or my recollection. A chain of these arsenals on the cost of Ireland means the power to fight an army. But I believe we will anticipate them. You will have to arrange with the Lady Superior for the passage of men from the west entrance to the chapel at any or all hours of the day and night. We will go about our work quietly; but it must be done, and in such a way that the owners of the arsenal don’t suspect us of acting.”

“I shall arrange.”

* * * * *

The magistrate was more distracted than he would have been by the discovery, owing to the belief he had that Galport had ceased to interest itself in subterranean schemes of emancipation. He had thought that all was quiet, and it was now revealed to him that something on a great scale was being prepared. He

could not help suspecting that Gorton really had a hand in the affair. Gorton had always cynically avowed his belief in Nationalism, but the magistrate discounted the avowal, putting it down as part of the man's business to cultivate the sympathy of a peasantry for whom he milled. He considered Gorton, however, so important a man in the community, so useful and workmanlike, that before proceeding farther with the discovery he determined to see him at his mill. Noticing a light in the upper windows, he went over about ten o'clock, and, putting his head in at the door, he bawled through the darkness, "Hey, Gorton!"

"Wa'al," said Gorton, coming to the top of his stair, "I guess this is a late visit to make. It's Mr. Butler's voice, I reckon. Come up. Mind your shins. Here, I'll hold a light for you. I'm cursed busy, but you're welcome."

The magistrate entered the upper room and sat down on Gorton's chair. There was darkness all round the room, and the moths were flying about the light in a lively competition of self-destruction.

How to open his business? Gorton on his part opened it with the offer of a choice cigar.

“Thank you, Gorton, I owe you three points at whist. Here you are. Let me have the change. I may be calling in at the Barracks for half-an-hour.”

Then there was a pause and extensive puffing.

“Gorton, I’ve often given you my opinion that I think you are a boon to the community.”

“You have been good enough to say so.”

“And to believe what I say. Now, what the devil have you to do with Irish politics? You are in business in a great way, on the path to a colossal fortune, and you don’t need any politics.”

“Wa’al, magistrate, we must agree to differ about that. Right in the centre of me there is a Joyce—I feel that Irish particle in my blood—and if I’m Horsa Gorton in trade, I’m something more when it comes to opinions.”

“I don’t object to your Irish particle; I have several important particles of the same sort in my own blood, and am ‘as Irish as may be at the proper time and in a right way. What I mean is that there is a general election down upon us, that I will want all my forces to keep order in the district, and that I would

have every good man and true to keep the peace till the elections are over. Hang it, you can come over and talk Nationalism in my house if you like ; only don't to these poor beggars who carry your sacks, and attend to your hoppers."

At that moment a low whistle sounded up the mill. The magistrate involuntarily started, and Gorton, who was shrewdly reading his features, had half a mind to pistol him on the spot. He seemed to read a knowledge of the plot in his eyes.

"Now then," he bawled, as he passed from the idea of assault, "if it's Larry, none of your mysterious whistling. There's only Mr. Butler and me here."

The whistle was not repeated ; but, the magistrate not going away, two heavy steps were presently heard on the quays, and two men, evidently rather excited with drink, made their way up the ladder.

"Only the magistrate and self here. Who is it ? "

"Come ashore, sir. We're up the bay to-night. Seventy-four days coming over. This is me and my second mate—an oldish

hand for the job, but a good seaman. Hope I see you well, sir."

Gorton looked at the second mate keenly; he had seen him before; the magistrate looked at him; it seemed to him as if he knew the face.

"This is not the first time you've been on Irish soil, my man," said the magistrate, scanning him.

"I've sailed to all parts," said the new mate, "and none o' them so welcome as Galport after a heavy run."

"You've got business, Gorton. I'll leave you. You've heard, I suppose, that that young scamp who bolted in the hooker is returned for Concannon, and is coming round this way to marry Mrs. Lynch."

"Is coming? Has come, I may tell you. He's a promising lad, O'Brien."

"Good night, then."

"O'Brien," said the new mate, "to be married to Mrs. Lynch! General Gorton, don't you know me? Don't you know the other man who sailed away in the hooker?"

"Michael Conran!"

"Michael it is, sir. I was shipped second

mate from New York by the same man that consigned the bottom cargo."

Gorton held out his hand and shook Conran's with the mysterious grasp of the conspirator. He took the sign of the man coming back again, after all these months of separation, to be a good one. He knew, too, that Michael had come back to trouble about his daughter; that, however, was a small matter in view of the red flame which was about to be lighted from Galport as a centre. Yet it must not be allowed to interfere with Michael's coolness at a crisis like this.

"Michael, I will hear your account of your wanderings afterwards. You have come back in good time for the upheaval. The general elections are on us. The government isn't looking. In a week's time we will have wrested the West and South for ever from their grasp."

"Well done, general. It's you that I find at your post. And Captain O'Grady has the brig ready from stem to stern."

"To fight or to run, general," said Captain O'Grady, looking about for a bottle.

"No more drink, boys, to-night. We want

our heads to-night and every hour of the next fortnight. It will be bloody work ; but it won't take long to do. Now, Michael, you get on board to-night again, and don't go near the Claddagh."

"Not to see my daughter, general, after all this weary separation ? "

"Not yet. Eileen will be high up in a fortnight. Go back to the brig ; for I have work to do that doesn't brook interruption."

CHAPTER XVIII.

BEFORE THE MARRIAGE.

MICHAEL and the captain of the brig did not go on board at once. The former thought he was entitled to disobey orders for half-an-hour or so, and he held out the promise of so hearty a reception at the Claddagh, that the latter agreed to make the circuit of the village. They were seen to go down, by the magistrate's scouts, and to pass beneath the walls of the Nunnery to the cottage.

Michael lingered a little before he lifted the latch. There were strange sounds within, sounds of grief, as if death had visited his home and the victim were not yet in the grave.

"Captain O'Grady, I think me choild is dead of waitin' for me. I haven't the heart to go in."

But O'Grady, lured so far off his way, had no mind to return without some reward; he lifted the latch, therefore, and pushing Michael

before him, presently stood in the centre of the floor.

The crones who had come to persecute Eileen were all there, holding a sort of "wake" without a corpse. They rose as the seamen entered, and one of them, scrutinising Conran closely, burst out, "It's Michael himself it is—Michael from over the seas, burlier than ever. Evil fall the day, Michael Conran, king of the Claddagh, that ever you went out of it. A great miracle has happened. Eileen has been brought to bed with a son, and no father to claim it, and she's been spirited away."

"And you're here, rejoicin' on her misfortune," said Michael, gazing vacantly from one crone to another, seated with glasses in their hands; then, with a low growl as of a wild beast in its rage, he swept the table of its contents, dashed through the tawdry group of mourners, and stood in Eileen's room.

"It's a trial, Michael Conran," said one of them, "but Sister Maria has been in and told us that a miracle has happened, that we will never see Eileen more, and that, if she was brought to bed of a boy, the Church will justify it."

The only response from Michael was an alteration of his animal sounds of anger to a wail of grief, which his skipper brought to a speedy end, by advancing and seizing him at the shoulders.

“Out o’ this, Michael Conran, this moment. Out of it I say and let the women alone to do that. You and I have something else to look after.”

And he pushed him unceremoniously into the open air, nor let him go till he had seated him in the dingey which was to bring them aboard the brig.

Gorton, in the meantime, went up to his hotel, where he had spread a luxurious supper for the member for Concannon, who had taken rooms adjacent to his own. The marriage with Mrs. Lynch seemed to the general rather opportune; it would happen about the time of the rising, and, if there were any faint suspicion in the magistrate’s mind, it would be allayed or turned aside by the exciting event. For at the County Club, no rising or general election had proved half so interesting as the final announcement that Beatrice was giving herself away.

Finn was very handsome and gay at the supper-table. His reception at Concannon had been enthusiastic. He had carried everything before him; O'Gee had telegraphed his congratulations, and members of O'Gee's party, one after another, had written him letters hailing him as a colleague, with expressions of the heartiest fellowship.

Above all, at Tasmania, he was received with open arms by Mrs. Lynch; and Morris, who was home from school, a slightly improved boy, did not offer him any rudeness.

"O'Brien," said Gorton, when they had the room to themselves, "you will not marry Mrs. Lynch for three weeks yet."

"We have no intention."

"In three weeks you will be able to marry her *en prince*. The work will have been done. The whole country is awake. We will be in the thick of it immediately. I give you no orders of a military nature; I believe you are in your true position now; you are a talker, but we will need you too. I am not wrong in thinking your future wife sympathises heartily with the movement?"

"In a kind of way, yes," said Finn, who

now that he was a member of parliament, looked at the approaching stroke of revolution as less desirable than he had once believed it to be.

"I am right in thinking she knows something of what is going to happen?"

"No, General Gorton, she knows nothing. She knows my aspirations. She has heard me address audiences. But she does not associate me with the movements of the secret societies."

"Have you fixed a day for your marriage?"

"The twenty-third. And Father Hugh will be home from Rome then. He made such an impression in London that the Pope has appointed him Bishop of Galport. We will be married from the Cathedral, and the Bishop will perform the ceremony."

"How about Mrs. Lynch's brother?"

"He doesn't like the marriage at all."

"Don't he?"

"No."

"And what do you propose to do?"

"Invite him to it and live him down."

Gorton made a movement with his knife, and a scowl overcast his face.

“Die him down, you mean. I suppose you haven’t heard that Michael Conran has returned? That his daughter has been betrayed by your wife’s brother, and that she has probably tossed herself and her infant into the sea?”

Finn started to his feet, his face wearing an expression of horror.

“No wonder that Captain Jeffery looks like a death’s head. I thought, I flattered myself, that I was the cause of it. Poor Eileen Conran!”

“Well, you’ll have no more competition for the estates—that’s all over—the true heir out of it. ‘It’s an ill wind,’ as the proverb says. But Jeffery’s blood will be on his head before your marriage takes place. I will whet Michael’s appetite by giving him this job to do, before we proceed any further.”

From which the pair proceeded to discuss the dry details of the approaching rebellion.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE INSTRUMENT OF VENGEANCE.

THE following evening Mrs. Lynch sat in her boudoir, arranging her marriage presents. There was an immense heap of them. Her favourite room could not hold all the miniatures in enamel, the vases in ornamental china, the gold and silver articles of vertu, candlesticks, clocks, caskets, articles in ivory, crystal, bronze, ormolu, cabinets, tables in buhl, marqueterie, lacquered ebony, which the thoughtfulness of friends had bestowed upon her. Her second marriage was bringing to her a larger attention than she had secured in her girlhood, when the major carried her off from Chiselhurst.

As she sat looking from one object to another, remembering the past and dreaming of the future, Morris came in upon her and began handling some of the elegancies with a view to discover the secrets of their mechanism.

"Mrs. O'Brien," he said, looking grotesquely at her, "do you know what I have been hearing?"

"Wait a little, dear. Not 'Mrs. O'Brien' just yet. In a little time, however. What have you been hearing?"

"Oh, ever such a funny, queer thing. That you and me has no business here. We are thieves and interlopers, and somebody down at the sea-shore is going to be squire of Tasmania, and shoot the grouse and fish in the river. Will Mr. O'Brien stand that?"

"Well, dear, if anyone will keep the estates together for us it is Mr. O'Brien. He is a great speaker, and would fight for years and years to keep us in our own."

"Then I vote for Finn O'Brien," said the boy, retiring with a loud whistle, to come back again to ask,

"Isn't a fellow who is in parliament an awful swell? He's as good as a major, isn't he? When I go back to school, they won't chaff me about my new father?"

"No, dear, they won't chaff you," said the widow, kissing her son, and following him to the drawing-room, where he was reading a

book of adventures on the hearth-rug, with a little heap of apples, oranges, grapes and nuts lying about his elbows.

"You had better take your things to your own room, dear. I expect Mr. O'Brien very soon, now. He will want to speak to me alone."

"Oh, I daresay," said the boy, gathering up his book and edibles, and going to the room which was called his own:

Mrs. Lynch sat down at her piano, and opening a volume of Chopin, liberated her feelings by playing what sounded like an impromptu creation of her own. She sat surrounded by melody, waiting for her lover; and presently rose to open a window. She bent her ear to listen if footsteps were coming up the gravel walk, or if the sound of wheels were to be heard from the road.

"He is late," she murmured, returning to her piano, only again to rise uneasily, and to hold her breath at the curtain, where the air was flowing in. But no sounds came with it except the wild old cry of the night-birds, wheeling on uneasy wings between the moorland and sea. It was not really late; it was

early evening ; but it was late for Finn, who generally anticipated his engagements with Mrs. Lynch by at least a good half-hour.

“Someone has arrived from London,” she reflected, “on parliamentary business. Ah, when the lover has become the husband, I wonder if he will find more time for his business than for me. Poor boy ! How soon he has been hurried into the fight, and how stoutly he bears himself ! Dear lover !”

Again she opened her Chopin, and tried to stifle a sense of uneasiness which was gathering at her heart.

“He is so punctual !” she said, “and if he does not come soon, he will arrive when Arthur does, and I shall not have seen him at all. Arthur is very good to make no objections to a marriage that I know he detests. They shall meet each other, however, and understand that they cannot be enemies.”

She rang for her maid, and told her to go out on the lawn and listen if she heard the sound of approaching wheels or the clatter of horses’ hoofs.

“Dear madam, it’s frightened I am to move from the house,” said Theresina.

“You chicken-heart!” said the widow, “fetch me a shawl.”

She had a shawl wrapped round her throat, and she went out under the stars, upon the lawn. The air revived her, and, yes, as she listened anew, she distinguished Finn’s footsteps, now on the gravel, now on the grass apparently, for there was an alternation of soft and hard sounds. He was chanting a song to himself as he came up, light of heart that he was.

“I will not show him that I have been anxious,” she reflected, speeding back to the house and seating herself with Chopin.

* * * * *

Finn left his hotel in rather poor spirits. The secret society business was weighing heavily on him. Notwithstanding the general’s sanguine view of the emancipation, he dreaded a collapse, and, thinking of Woolwich Arsenal, he knew that in the long-run no victory could be more than temporary. One little brig in the bay was the general’s fleet; there were three or four on the south coast, it was true; but a single gun-boat, as Finn knew, could annihilate them all.

As he neared Tasmania, however, his spirits rose. He ceased to be revolutionist, agitator, and Irishman, and became lover, pure and simple. There was nothing in the world for him, by the time he had passed the lodge gate, but Beatrice Lynch. But destiny, on this evening, was preparing something quite different for Finn O'Brien. Behind the laurels of the side walks a figure had been crouching for the last two hours. It was Michael Conran, with a clasp-knife in a sheath at his thigh. Michael was waiting to execute vengeance upon the man who had betrayed his daughter. The evening before he had not stayed on board the brig, but as soon as all was quiet, he had lowered himself into the dingey, and sculled right into the stream which flowed beside the Nunnery walls. He went up into his house again and found the room still full of people, and he was told that Captain Jeffery at the Barracks was the man for his knife. He stayed till early morning, when he again saw Gorton, who advised him to take vengeance into his own hands. He could see the captain any evening, calling on his sister at Tasmania; he knew him by sight; he was

not to be mistaken; let him open the Irish rebellion by removing one of the instruments of tyranny. Thus it was that Michael had secreted himself in the park, waiting for the blood of his enemy.

He waited so long, however, that he was in a fever of impatience when the figure of Finn O'Brien showed itself on the walk. His eyesight, usually so good, was dull and blunted, and he had no sensation beyond a mad impulse to plunge the blade at his thigh into his enemy's back. His agitation did not interfere with the coolness of his movements. He crept deliberately out from the trees and, with a step as soft as a panther's, he brought himself within arm's length of his victim.

A momentary flash of recognition seemed to tell him that this was not the man he wanted, that this was a figure familiar to him in former days, and it stayed his arm as he raised it for the plunge. Only for a moment, however; the next he had sheathed the blade to the hilt in O'Brien's back; and withdrawing it, as the dead man fell without a groan, he pierced him thrice at the heart, turning the handle in his

hand on the last occasion, as he lay over the body on the grass.

Then he dragged the body among the undergrowth, and moved away among the laurels, sighing and sweating, but with a triumphant joy in him, which he had no experience to compare with. He did not run. He had made sure of his work. He would have liked to call some passer-by to see how well it had been done. He needed applause for it, he deserved applause, he felt; and he took no great care to conceal himself after the deed was done. His right arm was reeking as he leapt the park wall and gained the road. His face bore the marks of blood and his hand was red, as he went to Gorton at the mill and reported the deed.

Gorton saw that he was a little mad with excitement and triumph; he kept him, however, with the marks of vengeance on him, and presented him to No. XII., which held its last meeting that night.

* * * * *

Mrs. Lynch spent a miserable evening, and time after time she went out on her lawn to listen. Could she possibly have been the

victim of an illusion? She walked down to the spot where she thought she heard her lover singing. Nothing there but the shiver of the wind among the aspens. She returned and tried to work off her disappointment in melody, but every now and again she paused, listening.

Hour after hour passed by, and it was only when midnight had ended her expectation of seeing him that she gave up hope.

It was the first time he had ever broken an engagement with her, and to-morrow the new bishop was coming, and was bringing with him Finn's mother, who was to be with her till the marriage.

She was bitterly disappointed, and the vagueness of her uneasiness kept her awake all through the night, so that she was very unlike her bridal self when she drove to the station to meet Mrs. O'Brien and the promoted Father Hugh Kenealy. Finn should have been there, too, to welcome his mother. But no. He had not come, and his non-appearance so irritated Mrs. Lynch that it saved her from deeper anxiety. Nothing could have happened to him, she felt sure, for was he not on the popular side in politics? It was only,

she sighed to think, the beginning of that absorption in outer things which must end in half-alienating him from her, as all husbands, she observed, were sooner or later alienated.

Finn's mother noticed nothing of the irritation; on the contrary, coming upon the platform in her homeliest attire, she was a little overpowered by the splendid daughter enveloping her in her arms and kissing her on both cheeks. Certainly, there could not have been a comelier peasant woman in Ireland to meet at a train, or even to acknowledge as a mother; but Mrs. O'Brien was surprised, and the tears came into her eyes, as she looked about for her boy, and felt that he had made a wonderful conquest.

All three drove forthwith to Tasmania, and to the inquiries about Finn, Mrs. Lynch only said that he had, occasionally, a great deal of work to do in connection with parliament. No doubt he would leave himself at liberty to come up when the most pressing part of it was overtaken.

"You know," said the widow, with much sweetness, which covered more anxiety than she cared to show, "he belongs to his country

now more than to you and me, and we must not be too exacting."

"I would not, madam, have him lose a moment for me," said Mrs. O'Brien in a rhetorical voice, which sounded curiously like her son's.

In the forenoon, Bishop Kenealy took a walk in the grounds by himself. He enjoyed the sunshine of the late autumn, as he looked down the hill upon the spires and crosses over which he had been called to preside. And as he walked, the sense of the blue, peaceful sea outside his diocese, and the quiet sky over it, and the invisible train of historical memories which seemed involuntarily to belong to sea, shore, and sky, filled him with tranquillity.

He had gone round the grounds and was returning to the house, when he was attracted by the fluttering of carrion overhead.

He looked among the undergrowth and perceived a foot, he pushed the bushes aside and saw a body; stooping to turn the body over, he recognised the murdered Finn O'Brien.

"God!" said the priest, "and is this the end of my poor, warm-hearted O'Brien? O'Brien," he cried, kneeling to chafe his frozen hands.

“O’Brien,” he repeated, as he moved the frozen hair from his brow, and closed the glassy eyes, “who has done this foul thing?”

As he swept past the drawing-room window, his grey face and set melancholy told Mrs. Lynch, who was watching for her lover, that never would that lover come again.

When he came in, Mrs. Lynch and Mrs. O’Brien rose together, shocked at the alteration of his features. But his voice was calmer than usual as he said, “A great, the greatest calamity in human experience has overtaken us. Let us bow down before the mysterious dispensation.”

And as he prayed, they learned what had befallen them.

Mrs. Lynch rose from her knees, white and tearless and cold, to help the shrieking peasant-woman to an upper room. And there she ministered to her, tearless all the time; and long after the solemn Cathedral bell had tolled Finn O’Brien to his grave.

CHAPTER XX.

LIBERATED IRELAND.

THE magistrate was unwilling to make apprehensions all at once, partly because he was afraid of the chaff of the County Club, and partly because he was convinced that Gorton was a boon to the community. After O'Brien's murder, however, when it was told him the brig in the bay was gradually rising in the water, without any visible discharge of cargo, he thought it was time to adopt more serious measures.

The result of his visit to the Barracks was that Captain Jeffery was ordered with a picket to the Nunnery, to take quiet possession of the concealed stores, and to lay under arrest any one who might be seen about the subterranean passages.

The presence of the soldiers was only known to the Lady Superior, Sister Maria, and a priest,

the whole thing being accomplished in such quietude. But while the men were posted between the crypt and the cavern, an incident occurred. The priest came to Jeffery, and asked him if he could not spare a few minutes to speak with one who greatly wished to see him. He said he could, and entering the Nunnery, passed to the sleeping room of the Lady Superior, where his wife was reclining at the fireside, with a baby in her arms.

Being admitted to Eileen the door closed behind him, and Jeffery for a moment could hardly believe his eyes.

"It's a surprise you have got," said Eileen, the tears streaming down her cheeks. "And our boy has come. And I thought you would like to see him. Take him, Arthur, in your arms for a little, and give him a father's welcome."

The captain bowed over the figure of his wife, kissed her thrice, and took the boy in his arms. He could not speak for some time, as he held the child. Silently he replaced him in his mother's lap. And he stood looking down at mother and son in silence.

"Eileen," he said, when he had recovered

himself, "the time has come when I must acknowledge you before the world. I mean to pass in my sword and go abroad. You shall come with me out of this fatal Ireland, to another world, where there will be no one to criticise our marriage, where we shall be at liberty to be happy in our own way. A little more of it and I shall have lost my reason. And this law-suit with my sister—you will abandon it? They are simply making capital out of it for the purposes of O'Gee and the rest of them."

"The boy can take it up if so he is disposed when he comes to be a man," said Eileen, pressing her child to her bosom. "I have no wish now to do but what you do. Oh, I have been very deceitful with you, and it's the Lady Superior who has shown me that I shouldn't have been lending myself to the secret society and to helping Ireland, if you didn't wish it, and that when I took it on me to be your wife, it was duty to you I owed next to the Mother of God; and happy I am it's your heart she has given back to me, as I asked for it from her. And it's the beautiful boy she has given us, and the Lady Superior, who knew

my mother, says he is a Lynch too, like her."

"Well, Eileen, he can fight for his own property with Beatrice's boy when he comes to be a greedy man. In the meantime you and I will carry him far enough out of it and all memory of the hardships you have had here."

"And they thought I was a loose girl, Arthur, and they hunted me into the Nunnery," said Eileen, after some moments of silent reflection; "I had all the Claddagh against me, and if it's a Saxon soldier they knew I married, they would have been as bad with me, at any rate. Oh yes, I will gladly go beyond the seas with you, wherever you like to go, and as soon as you have given up your sword."

"The Claddagh shall be taught that for hunting the Saxon soldier's wife, it must endure some punishment. Eileen, we have discovered stores of powder and shot beyond the Nunnery, and it is my duty now to find the conspirators."

Eileen clutched her child convulsively, as she looked at her husband.

"Oh, it is me, Arthur, it is me who have helped to do it. I have been taught that

Ireland is poor and can be freed from misery by fighting, and I was to give out the arms on the great day, soon supposed to be come, and I concealed the arms, and the powder and the shot, and waited, and was to be made a great princess of my people. Oh, deluded that I have been! It's mischief I have been preparing for my people all along, and the Mother of God was making me unhappy all through this year to teach me my transgressions."

"It's over now, Eileen; but if you are in the plots I must take you out of this as fast as I can. Here, in the Nunnery you are safe; but I will only be sure of you when you are far on the deep sea, sailing to the south of the world."

"Anything that keeps us together"—and at that moment the Lady Superior came in to tell the captain that his wife was in no fit condition to put up with long interviews.

Jeffery thanked her for her protection to Eileen, and said that one of these days he should remove her from their care, as he meant to leave the Barracks and seek fortune at the other side of the world. But Eileen

and he would never forget what she had done for them in the time of their extremity.

* * * * *

When Gorton heard that Michael Conran had removed Finn O'Brien instead of Captain Jeffery, he gave way to a tremendous outburst of passion at his mill. His men, who were all more or less in his plot, fled before him as he stamped, and foamed and swore from his upper room to the granary, neither concealing his wrath nor the cause of it. "There's no helping you," he called down his ladder, in a moment of extravagant irritation, to a group of awe-stricken labourers, who were discussing the death in whispers. "You are a one-horse, left-handed generation, fit for nothing but blundering. Ireland will never be free in this world. Never, I say, and I begin to think, don't deserve to. Get out o' my sight every man of you, and let me hear you at your hoppers, you scurvy pack of niggers!"

Perhaps he was a little hard on them, for they were all prepared to take up arms at the general's request, and meant to go through

fire and blood with him. Later on, however, his wrath was changed to a mood of a different kind. Michael Conran, crestfallen and humble, crept up his ladder and told him it was all up. The soldiers were out and the plot was known, and there was nothing for it but flight. How was the plot known? He had been to the Nunnery, he said, had crept down to it from the floor of his house, and had no sooner planted his feet upon the shingle than two red-coats seized and hand-cuffed him.

"You are a liar," cried Gorton, "you are a timid hound, turning tail at the last moment. You have made up that story. Where is Captain O'Grady?"

"Made up, have I? Look at that."

And Conran held out his recently manacled arms, where the iron had indented deep, red marks.

"How did you get those off, I'd like to know?"

"You won't believe me."

"I will, you fool. Go on with your story. And be cursed quick about it."

"I was hand-cuffed and taken through a long passage to the Nunnery, where I never

knew there was opening before. And below the chapel, Captain Jeffery, sitting at a wooden table among the tombs, with a lamp in front of him, received me. He told the soldiers to go back to their duty and he would deal with me. And before I knew that he knew me, he said, 'Michael Conran, you are a traitor to your country, and you are on the sure road to the gallows. I don't know that you won't be hanged. But, Michael, it happens that I have married your daughter, Eileen, and that I owe you a duty which makes me traitor to my conscience. Take these off your hands'—and he removed the hand-cuffs—'and follow me' said he. I followed him through a dark passage, and coming to a door he said, 'Now I will show you your daughter for two minutes; you must speak low and not excite her. In two minutes, having heard from her own lips that she is my wife, and that her son is our son, lawfully begotten, you come out here.' And he held the muzzle of a pistol at my head. I went in, sir, and there was Eileen, quite the lady, looking beautiful, and I felt such a wicked sinner before God Almighty that I couldn't put a finger on the child that was my grand-

child, nor on its innocent mother. 'Eileen,' was all I could say, 'I have two minutes to see you. I know that you are no disgrace to your people. And now I'm away again!' And whether she recognised me or not is more than I can say. And the officer led me back to the chapel and to a gate on the shore, and here I am. His last words were—'You have an hour's start. With that you may escape with your life.' And here I am, with three quarters of the precious time spent, and you and me only fifteen minutes to escape into Galport Bay."

"It is all up, I guess," said Gorton, rummaging a drawer. "All up and nothing done. Poor devils! You will find a boat at the steps. I'll join you in a minute. Pull out into the centre of the stream and over the bar, leisurely, and as if you were doing it for your pleasure."

In a couple of minutes Gorton, with a huge cigar in his mouth, was sitting in the stern, looking the impersonation of coolness, while Michael rowed him to the brig. On the beach at the bar, they saw a priestly figure, waving distressed arms.

"It's O'Clery," said Gorton. "Go in and see what he wants."

"We have but five minutes," replied Michael, turning the boat's head to the shore.

"Jump in, Father John," said Gorton, giving the priest an arm and a friendly pull to a seat beside himself. "I guess I know."

"I am a fugitive," said the priest, breathless and hot; "I am driven from Loughan by the soldiery. They know all. Poor Ireland! Poor Ireland! She is delivered over into their hands once more."

Fortunately for the fugitives there was no gun-boat in the bay. There was a revenue cutter, however, and as Gorton got on deck, he saw a boat with ten armed men set out in the direction of the brig:

"Shake out them top-sails," said the American, "a hand at the jib and foresail—set every stitch she can carry, and snap that anchor-chain."

There was a coastguardsman on board; he had been asleep in the fore part of the brig, having been well treated. He came aft and asked the meaning of the orders, and pointed

to the approaching boat. Gorton paid no attention to him, though he saw him lean over the stern at the wheel and make impassioned signals of haste. Presently the brig was enveloped in a cloud of canvas and began tugging vehemently at her anchor. The carpenter had severed a link; the weight of the ship did the rest. Conran, who knew the bay, caught the spokes of the wheel, and the brig with a favouring wind rushed out of the anchorage.

“Now then,” said Gorton to the coast-guardsmen, seizing him by the legs, “you seem mightily anxious to be with your friends” — and disengaging his hands he jerked him astern.

“It’ll blow a skyful of wind,” he said, turning with a sardonic look to the crew, who stopped for an instant to shake with laughter.

“And we’ll need it all,” said O’Grady, getting himself into his sea-gear.

“Now then,” for a clean run back to New York,” went on Gorton, “to the land of the free. But, on my soul, the slaves are awake. Why, there are a dozen, twenty, thirty boat sails making for Columbkille. And hearken!

Father John you know sounds—what's that bell, think ye? "

"The old sacred bell of St. Columbkil," said the priest, tears standing in his eyes "and lights starting out upon the mountain tops, and the boys trooping to the battle-field and their leaders flying across the sea. Poor Ireland! Poor Ireland!"

"I gave no orders to have the bell rung to-night. It's a trap. We have been betrayed from top to bottom. False bell, before its time! Father John, you and I will go below till we are beyond earshot of it. You are going to a better land. Don't cut up tender because we have missed our chance. Other men and other opportunities and Ireland shall be free."

"Never, never," cried the priest, grasping the cabin rails and tottering below. In a few hours the brig was well out on the bosom of the Atlantic.

* * * * *

The County Club had several things to discuss at its next meeting besides half-guinea points at whist. The general election was storming over the country, and O'Gee's party

was gathering strength from borough to borough, and county to county, in the south and west of Ireland. The patriot had been to Galport and attended his secretary's funeral, and from a window in his hotel had thrown out a broad hint that the crime was due to an assassinating party among the landlords—a hint which was received with becoming manifestation of belief by a dense crowd of admirers.

“I made him eat his own words on that subject,” said De Burgh, “in the smoking-room of the hotel. He curls up like a caterpillar when he feels a hand at his throat. He will not try that insinuation again in these parts of the world.”

“Er—” drawled Lord Mountinnes, looking up from the *Times*, “listen to this:—‘A plot—er—ramifying widely through the west and south of Ireland has—er—been discovered at Galport and promptly suppressed. The suspected ringleaders have, unfortunately, made good their escape, but’—er—the old story, poor Tom, Dick and Harry—‘others are now in custody and wait examination. It is believed that the ‘removal’—er—of the member for

Concannon is connected with some desire on his part to become an informer—er—which impression is confirmed by the absence of all popular demonstration at the grave of the unfortunate member.’ ”

“I should think that was a true surmise,” said the Colonel; “these fellows always turn on each other. But they really had very nearly made a little noise this time, and there is a slight suspicion of our friend, Gorton, having a hand in it. Anyhow he has thought a voyage an opportune thing. Butler, for some reason or other, is very quiet about it. By the way, have you heard of young Jeffery—romantic dog! Has been married ever so long to a Nunnery girl, has passed in his sword, and is now *en route* to some outlandish place in Australia.”

“Er—” said Lord Mountinnes, who was twisting his eye-glass at the window, “can you explain, any of you, the meaning of this little crowd?”

At that moment the magistrate entered the room, and walking to the window, exclaimed,

“There goes the end of a story of real life, which if it were written down nobody would

believe. That's Captain Jeffery and his young wife and baby going away to Australia. That's the new Catholic bishop, walking side by side with poor Mrs. Lynch—don't she look a little like a beautiful Sister of Mercy in those black garments? Brother and sister part to-day, perhaps never to meet again. And now they have entered the station."

"Er—," said his lordship, "graves and good-byes at railway-stations, revolutions, poor luck at whist,—De Burgh, ring the bell."

THE END.

